NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

No. CXXXVII.

OCTOBER, 1847.

ART. I. — 1. *The Reformers before the Reformation. The Fifteenth Century. John Huss and the Council of Constance.* By ÉMILE DE BONNECHOSE. Translated from the French, by CAMPBELL MACKENZIE, B. A. Edinburgh: William Whyte & Co. 1844. 2 vols. 8vo.

2. *Letters of John Huss, written during his Exile and Imprisonment, with Martin Luther's Preface, and a General View of the Works of Huss.* By ÉMILE DE BONNECHOSE. Translated by CAMPBELL MACKENZIE, B. A. Edinburgh: William Whyte & Co. 1846. 8vo.

3. *Johann Hussens Leben. Ein Lesebuch für den Bürger.* Leipzig. 1804.

THE causes of every great revolution in politics or religion are easily stated in general terms. But when an inquirer goes farther, and seeks to measure the exact proportions of the several elements, he undertakes a very difficult, if not an idle, task. We can no more calculate, for instance, a ratio between the positive and negative forces which produced the Reformation, or cast to a fraction the balance between the abuses of the church and the character of Luther, than we can settle the point of precedence between a pestle and a mortar, or determine the comparative ability of a sharp sword and a stout arm to inflict a severe wound. The difficulty is hardly lessened when we confine ourselves to one of these forces, that is, to the character of Luther. Here, too, a question at once arises, how far his opinions

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were original, and how far derived from the "Reformers before the Reformation." That he was in some degree their debtor, consciously or unconsciously, cannot be denied; but we can never know the precise amount of the obligation. Every one borrows, steals, contracts, or inhales a large part of his opinions; but that man must be well versed indeed in the genealogy and chronology of his own ideas, who can detect the origin of those which he has held so long that they fearlessly strut about in the old clothes of instinct. If he cannot do this in his own case, how can he expect to succeed better with his neighbours, and above all, with historical characters, for his information about whom he is largely beholden to ignorant and prejudiced witnesses; unless, indeed, he resorts to that universal solvent of intractable facts, an historical theory? He may take refuge, for instance, in a peculiar metempsychosis, and make every great mind the product of a fortuitous concourse of individual attributes, which, once set free from their original combinations, wander about seeking new affinities, and at length become consolidated into new natures. When, for instance, in the course of human events, the world became ripe for a reformer, certain vagrant atoms, it seems, of Wycliffe, and Huss, and Savonarola, and Wessel might be spiritually discerned on St. Martin's day, wending their way to Eisleben, to the low-roofed house of Hans and Gretha Luther, to become the constituents of a new-born babe. If, however, our inquirer sees more in greatness than a form of colonization, he may adopt the theory of development which teaches that some of Nature's journeymen made the pre-Lutheran Reformers, or at best that Nature herself tried her 'prentice hand on them, and, only after producing a series of gradually improving results, sent Luther at last full-grown into the world.

We do not mean, in these remarks, to deny the possibility of tracing in each attempt at a reformation some effects of previous efforts. No one can doubt that Huss was a disciple, though not a slavish one, of Wycliffe, or that the condition of society and letters at the beginning of the sixteenth century had been in some measure prepared by successive insurrections against the church of Rome. But we contend, that in such inquiries we soon reach the limits of certainty. So imperfect are all historical notices of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

habits of thought and action among the common people two or three centuries ago, that it is almost vain to hope for any clear perception of them. So uncertain, too, must the transmission of thought from one mind to another always be, that we can never confidently assert of a great man how far he was an effect, and where he began to be an independent cause.

These reflections, as it seems to us, point to the true place and value in history of the early projects of reform, and consequently of the various crises which the Roman church experienced before the Reformation. Without insisting on them as so many causes, productive of other similar movements or periods, they are best treated as parallel effects, attributable to common or cognate forces, and therefore strongly illustrative of each other. Instead of being regarded as fires caught from one another, they are more justly compared to the eruptions of a group of volcanoes, like Etna, Stromboli, and Vesuvius, which do not, at least so far as we know, cause each other, but yet point to a common source.

Of these remote struggles, none is more interesting than the Hussite movement; and of the crises of the church, none was more vital than that of the great Schism of the West, which began only five years after the birth of Huss, and could not be extinguished without his martyrdom. The life of Huss, therefore, and the history of the Schism are intimately connected with each other. The former, though short in its duration, and spent for the most part in the remote kingdom of Bohemia, is important and interesting both in a biographical and historical point of view. Though from him we have few stout, blunt speeches, such as Luther has bequeathed, and though no kind hand has gathered up the table-talk of a man who, not having dared to become a husband and a father, never had a domestic board, yet enough has been gleaned from the past to rescue his name from the oblivion which has nearly overtaken many other forerunners of the great Reformer. His cruel death is, of itself, a lasting title to remembrance and sympathy. Unsatisfactory as our sources of information in reference to Huss are, in too many respects, his history is far more attractive than that of his great teacher, Wycliffe, whose biography is so barren of personal incidents, that one often longs for a drop of human nature to mix with the dust of theology.

Before entering on our proper subject, the life of Huss, it

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is necessary, in order to have a clear understanding of his character, position, and fate, to take a brief survey of the state of Europe during the continuance of the Schism.

The "Babylonish captivity" of the popes at Avignon, having endured a little longer than its prototype, was terminated at length in 1377 by the return of Gregory II. to the Eternal City. At his death, which happened in the next year, the first choice of the cardinals fell on an Italian, the Archbishop of Bari, who assumed the title of Urban VI. But the imprudence and imperiousness of the new pontiff, whose head seems to have been turned by this elevation, threw every thing into confusion. Instead of applying gentle remedies, which were all that the enfeebled church could bear, and which might have gradually and soothingly repressed its abuses, he assumed an arbitrary and menacing tone, and treated the corrupt practices of his cardinals as if wrong had not become right by immemorial prescription, and primitive purity had not long ago passed out of remembrance. He even went so far as to provoke one of the College to reply to him, with Pickwickian discrimination, — "As Archbishop of Bari, thou hast lied." This intemperate demeanour, aggravated as it was by a pointed neglect of the wishes of the cardinals in important cases, entirely alienated from him the French faction in the College. Taking advantage of certain marks of compulsion, which had attended the election of Urban, they made them the pretext for withdrawing from Rome and declaring the election void. In order, however, to raise one of their own number to the chair, it was advisable to secure the coöperation of the three Italian cardinals. The trick by which this was accomplished would have done honor to Scapin himself. The three were each separately assured of receiving the votes of their French brethren, as the reward of compliance. They all took the bait, and by their presence in the conclave gave their sanction to the choice of Clement VII., before known as the Cardinal of Geneva. We are not informed of the precise character of the ejaculations in which the cheated prelates indulged; but we can fancy that they were not altogether canonical.

After a short residence in Italy, Clement found it convenient to retire to Avignon, which thus became again the seat of a papal, though a schismatic court, composed of the cardinals of his *obedience*, as it was called. Urban, on the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other hand, not to be without his court, nominated between twenty and thirty new cardinals ; an example which Clement followed by raising the number of his to thirty-six. Thus commenced in trickery and insult the great Schism of the West, which, under these popes and their successors, continued for forty years to disgrace, distract, and scandalize all Europe.*

In this chaotic interval, in which tragic, comic, and farcical elements are mingled in discord so capricious as almost to defy history, it is not difficult to imagine what woes the church must have suffered. The Christian world was humiliated by the unedifying spectacle of its rival heads, each regarding the other as an intruder and schismatic, and bent only on devising means to crush or depose him. While there had been but a single pope, it was his interest and that of his court to throw as thick a veil over their venality and luxury as a liberal culture of those indispensable graces would allow. But now it became a capital point in the policy of each of the rivals to decry the title and blacken the fame of the other. Epithets were bandied to and fro between these spiritual fathers, which, if believed, could not raise the general estimation of their virtue ; and if not believed, would afford an equally unfavorable criterion of their temper and taste. Besides, the mere existence of such a quarrel was a constant source of grief to all well-disposed Christians, some of whom, in the hope of a remedy for the disease, were led to probe old wounds, which, for the peace of the papacy, ought to have been left to fester in the dark. The extinction of the Schism and the reformation of the clergy were prayed for in the same breath, and the undeniable corruption of the head emboldened many to attack the disorders of the members. It was an ill omen for the papacy, that the loudest cry of remonstrance against simony, extortion, and lewdness rose from the midst of the church itself. The terrible philippic of Clemangis against the corruption of the clergy lost nothing of its significance from the

* The Roman popes between the commencement of the Schism and the Council of Pisa were Urban VI., Boniface IX., Innocent VII., and Gregory XII. Those at Avignon during the same period were Clement VII. and Benedict XIII. The Schism continued till the Council of Constance, under Gregory, Benedict, and the two successive popes who derived their authority from the Council of Pisa.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fact, that its author was himself a priest, and had sat on the right hand of the sovereign pontiff. This outcry against ecclesiastical abuses was soon naturally associated with the doctrine, that the church universal (and of course an œcumenical council) being the constituent body, was superior to its visible head and representative, the Bishop of Rome; for in the assertion of this doctrine many good and true servants of the church, such as Gerson, "the most Christian doctor," and D'Ailly, "the hammer of heretics," thought they saw the only means of extinguishing the Schism behind which these abuses found shelter. That "Peter's chair," to quote old Fuller, was not thus "broken, betwixt two sitting down at once," is a most striking proof of the wisdom and cunning of the persevering policy which had so deeply rooted the institutions of the Romish church in every region of Western Europe. Nothing less substantial than this could have enabled it to stagger on under its portentous corruption, its organized system of tyrannical exaction, its despicable traffic in the terms of salvation, and the eternal shuffling, doubling, and perjury of its rival pretenders to infallibility.

But this was not all. The wrangling popes were not content to ply the engines of their spiritual armory, but the carnal aid of earthly princes was called in. These potentates, made wise in their generation by the great mother of invention, were adroit enough to turn the rent in the church to the advantage of their private quarrels; and the popes, on their part, to one or both of whom the union of the discordant powers of Europe might be a death-warrant, were not unwilling to lend their ecclesiastical influence to their respective supporters. Thus, for instance, there were at this time two pretenders to the throne of Naples; each had his pope to back him. France and Scotland, also, during a part of this period, were hostile to England; and, accordingly, while England recognized the Roman pope, her neighbours were stanch adherents of him of Avignon. In this manner, strife engendered strife, and malice propagated malice, until Europe seemed ready to sink into anarchy and ruin.

To make the Iliad of woes complete, the close of the fourteenth century was marked by an almost incredible dearth of great men in the church, the state, and the field. From 1380 to 1422, the throne of France was held by that shadow of royalty, the imbecile and unfortunate Charles VI., who had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

just enough of reason to save him from a madhouse, and more than enough of madness to make him the tool, and his kingdom the prey, of contending factions. Twenty-two years of English history in this century fall to the reign of Richard II., another king of shreds and patches, who shares in British annals the palm of weakness with the second Edward. The first year of the Schism witnessed the accession of a new emperor, and Wenceslaus, *semper Augustus*, and, it might have been added, *semper vino ambustus*, took into his tremulous hand the sceptre of Charlemagne. Italy was, what it had been, the scene of sanguinary wars, the cock-pit of ferocious tyrants. An interview which took place about the beginning of the fifteenth century between Charles and Wenceslaus, with the professed design of taking measures to terminate the Schism, if it is truly reported, is enough to make the reader groan for the miseries of their unhappy states. They met at Rheims. The first day, Wenceslaus was too drunk to attend to business; the next, Charles had a fit of insanity, and the conference was broken up. The few great names of these melancholy years are those of Wycliffe, Gerson, and Henry of Lancaster, afterwards King Henry IV. The opening of a new century, however, brought the great Bohemian reformer upon the stage.

John Huss was indebted for his surname to his native village of Hussinetz, in the southwestern corner of Bohemia. Borrowing of this sort was not uncommon among the scholars of that day; and surely the insignificant parishes and hamlets which have thus achieved greatness have no right to complain of the free use made of their names. The word *Huss*, indeed, has other claims to notice, inasmuch as it is the *alias* by which the classic bird that saved the Roman capitol is known in Bohemia; — a pun-provoking coincidence, which was deemed not unworthy to exercise the wit of the Reformer and his contemporaries.*

The memorials which have come down to us of the early life of John Huss are such only as could be gathered from the short and simple annals of the poor. He is said to have been born on the 6th of July, 1373. We have his own

* By giving the proper harshness to the initial aspirate, and sounding the vowel in the German manner, we obtain a very near approximation to the Saxon *goose*.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

testimony to the lowly calling and narrow circumstances of his father. The child of poverty might have gone the way of the "village Hampdens," had it not been for the fortunate vicinity of a monastery, to which he used to repair, and where his good-nature and intelligence early gained the favor of the monks. By their advice, his poor mother, who was left a widow in the childhood of her son, was persuaded to make an effort to bring him up to the church, — the chief refuge of low-born merit in those days. But without the assistance of Nicholas of Hussinetz, the feudal lord of the village, she could not have effected her purpose ; for so extreme was her poverty, that she had not wherewithal to clothe the child decently. By the aid of this benevolent nobleman, who undertook the present charge of the lad, Huss was enabled to prosecute his studies, first at Hussinetz, and afterwards at a school of some note in Prachalitz, the shire town of the province. Here he acquitted himself with great credit, and when he returned to his overjoyed mother, laden with the proofs of his success, he declared his determination to enter the University at Prague. The great stumbling-block was his exceeding poverty ; but Huss was used to that, and the hope of fame had already outgrown the fear of want. His mother gave her assent to the plan ; and when the day of her son's departure arrived, and the brief preparations of the poor had been completed, she set out with him, for she would not let him go alone, for the capital. It is related, that an ominous accident befell the worthy dame in this journey. She had taken a cake, which she had baked on purpose, and a live goose, for a present to the future teachers of her son. One of these widow's mites, not so green as some of its kind, and smitten with a provident dread of an academical appetite, took to its wings, and went to seek another fortune. No one seems, however, to have suffered any calamity in consequence, except the professor for whose especial edification the truant had been intended.

Thus, at the age of sixteen, was Huss left at Prague to learn that first lesson in a university education, the necessity of self-dependence. There was much to dismay a poor and almost friendless boy, thrown among thousands of fellow-students, and forced to fight his way against fearful odds. The University was now in its glory. It was the oldest in Germany, and had just closed the first half-century of a pros-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perous career, which had placed it at the head of the literary institutions of central Europe. Its high repute is attested, not only by the vast number of its students, but by their division into four nations, the Bohemian, Bavarian, Saxon, and Polish. Some jealousy naturally existed between the native students and those of the other three nations, which in time, as we shall see, ripened into an implacable feud, and followed Huss even to the stake. The young Bohemian had a right to expect the applause and sympathy of his countrymen, and, in nearly the same proportion, the indifference or suspicion of their rivals.

Of his college life only very scanty notices have been preserved. He is said, indeed, though on doubtful authority, to have helped himself along by accepting the post of *famulus* to a professor, a laborious place, but not unacceptable, as it gave him access to the greatest of all luxuries to a poor student, a library. He read, we are told, with the greatest delight, the lives of the martyrs, and on one occasion became so absorbed in the history of St. Laurence of gridiron memory, that he started up and thrust his hand into the fire, to try if he could bear pain as well; and when a friend drew him back, exclaimed, — "It was only to imitate the man in the book." On this incident an historian slily remarks, that he did well to prepare himself for the fire, as the sequel proved. We find nothing to add, except an unconscious testimony to the innocence of his youth, which is preserved in a letter, written by him just before his departure for Constance, which was not to be opened till after his death. In this epistle he thus confesses the sins of his youth: — "Know, alas! that before receiving the priesthood, I lost much time in playing at chess, and through this game often suffered myself to be provoked, as well as provoked others, to anger. I recommend myself to thy prayers before God, for this sin and for my other innumerable transgressions."

Huss took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1393, of Bachelor of Divinity in 1394, of Master of Arts in 1396; and in 1401 he appears as Dean of the Faculty of Theology. In 14[illegible] he was appointed preacher at the University Chapel of Bethlehem, a church recently built and endowed by two liberal Bohemians, for the preaching of the gospel in their native tongue. For an ardent and honest man, burning with zeal in the cause of Christ and filled with all boldness to de-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clare his word, this was an enviable position. He taught the poor in their own language, and, while he thus bore out the mission of the gospel, discharged a pious debt to that poverty which had been his own hardy nurse. But Huss was no respecter of persons. He had a word for the rich, too, and by the plainness of his discourses soon gave offence to two men of consequence, whose shoes began to pinch them. They posted off to the archbishop to get satisfaction. But the time had not yet come to muzzle the intrepid preacher. He had not yet trod on the toes of the clergy; and the excellent primate dismissed the fuming gentlemen with the remark, that Huss had only done his duty. Before long, however, the young priest began to take unseemly liberties with his own order, and to denounce the lives of men who were never guilty of forgetting one essential of their sacred office, namely, its privileges, and whose conduct was a consistent illustration of the evangelical maxim, that no man could serve God and Mammon. The purity of his life, the austere simplicity of his manners, to which his unwilling enemies have been forced to bear witness,* and the popular position which he occupied authorized and impelled him to take this step. The clergy now perceived that he had done more than his duty, and appealed to King Wenceslaus for an injunction of silence on the meddling babbler. That easy prince, too indolent to interfere with a party quarrel, and not over-anxious to lavish his royal graces on a fat and restive priesthood, coolly replied, that "they must be content to take what they were so ready to give." What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander; so they gained nothing by their motion.

In this affair, Huss was probably supported by a power behind the throne. He had held for some time the office of confessor to Sophia, the second queen of Wenceslaus; a place which a less courageous man might have hesitated to accept; for one of his predecessors in that station, the sainted John of Nepomuk had, about ten years before, paid

* "Huss," says the Jesuit Balbinus, "was always esteemed to be a man of greater acuteness than eloquence; but the modesty and severity of his manners, his austere and blameless life, his pale and melancholy face, his gentleness and affability to all, even to the meanest persons, were more persuasive than the eloquence of speech."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a very dear price for his fidelity to his royal mistress, the first wife of Wenceslaus. This king, though not without good qualities, could play, on occasion, the tyrant, the libertine, or the sot, — a triad of characters admirably suited to sustain and enforce each other. His unhappy spouse, who had some reason to be offended with him in at least one of these capacities, weary of expostulating with her crapulous lord, and true to the instinct of her sex, poured her sorrows into the ear of her unlucky confessor. The king insisted that the priest should betray the confidence of the queen. But neither promises, threats, nor tortures could shake his constant mind; and the exasperated tyrant had him bound hand and foot, and cast into the Moldau. The indignant river refused to hide the murderous deed, and for three days left its channel dry. The martyr was beatified and canonized in due time, and has become one of the notabilities of Bohemia; as travellers in that country can testify, who begin with admiring his history, and end with voting him an intolerable bore. Under such auspices was Huss advanced to this responsible place, which he seems to have filled so discreetly as to gain the esteem of the queen, and not only to steer clear of the king's wrath, but to establish himself firmly in his good graces. The doctrine of chances, indeed, was in his favor, the drowning of one confessor being a full share for one king.*

It is evident enough, that, with all the mildness of his disposition, there was in Huss's nature somewhat of the stuff that reformers are made of. Nor was the soil of Bohemia at all unfavorable to the full growth of bold opinions. The conversion of the kingdom to Christianity had been originally accomplished by missionaries of the Greek church; and the people had long resisted the introduction of Romish usages, especially the interdiction of the cup at the Lord's Supper, on which point the Bohemian church had hardly become orthodox even in the middle of the fourteenth century. The contest was kept up by a succession of cour-

* It is a curious fact, which is reported as true, that Charles, the father of Wenceslaus, wished to have him educated by Petrarch; but that the poet declined the task, and the youth was brought up in the ways of the court. A speculator on historical possibilities might find in these circumstances the elements of a horoscope which would change the entire aspect of the fifteenth century.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ageous and eloquent men, one of whom, the famous Janow, died at Prague in 1394, just as Huss was completing his academical studies. The practice of communion in both kinds never, in fact, died out among the common people. Expelled from the churches, it took refuge in private dwellings, till the heat of persecution drove the Bohemian covenanters to more secret lurking-places, and forced them to meet in armed bands. This state of things accounts for the sudden rise of the peasants after the death of Huss, and their obstinate attachment throughout the ensuing war to the sacramental cup, which became their symbol and watchword. The Schism, too, by exposing the weak points of the papacy and aggravating the corruption of the clergy, had spurred the sides of heresy, while the quarrels of the popes left them no time to suppress it. To these circumstances must be added the death of the Emperor Charles IV., a devoted slave of Rome, which happened just at the commencement of the Schism, and the accession to the imperial and Bohemian thrones of Wenceslaus, who inherited but a moderate share of his father's submissiveness. In this posture of affairs, a little spark might kindle a great fire, and the spark was soon struck.

On the last day of the year 1384, John Wycliffe, the great English Reformer, died at his rectory of Lutterworth; "admirable," says Fuller, "that a hare so often hunted with so many packs of dogs should die at last quietly sitting in his form." His doctrines had taken firm root in England, and for several years after his death were held with comparative impunity, in consequence of the civil disorders of the kingdom. It was not long before they made their way to the Continent, and penetrated into Bohemia. Their introduction was probably facilitated by the intimate connection which subsisted for twelve years between the royal families of the two countries; Anne of Bohemia, the sister of Wenceslaus, having become the queen of Richard II. of England. And yet, if we may trust the accounts we meet with, there is no reason to suppose that Huss became familiar with the writings of Wycliffe till some time after his appointment at the Bethlehem Chapel. We are told, indeed, that when a young student of Prague (the famous Jerome, according to one account) brought with him, on his return from England, several of the Reformer's works, Huss advised his friend to burn

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them or throw them into the Moldau. He had probably heard of their author only as a rampant heretic, who had turned the English church upside down, and he drew back from his writings as from the suggestions of the Evil One. He was as yet on the threshold of life, and it had not been revealed to him what he should be. But as his destiny unfolded itself, and his work was slowly unrolled before him, he found himself brought into closer communion with the arch-heretic, and began to suspect that no great gulf was fixed between them. The precise course of this revolution in his opinions cannot be followed; though some light is thrown upon it by the events of the period.*

In the year 1403, Pope Boniface IX. sent a corps of chapmen into Bohemia to dispose of an invoice of indulgences, with the proceeds of which he hoped to comfort his famished coffers. They came at an unfortunate juncture. Wenceslaus was still smarting under his deposal from the imperial throne, which had taken place two or three years before, not without the connivance of the pope. Sigismund, too, the brother of Wenceslaus, had a bone to pick with Boniface, for stirring up his Hungarian subjects to revolt. These particular grievances, added to their natural aversion to the migration of gold and silver into any pockets but their own, provoked them to lay an interdict on the peddlers of salvation. Huss did not omit so favorable an opportunity to preach against an outrageous abuse of ecclesiastical power. He came out with a bold discourse in condemnation of the traffic, and thus commenced his career as a reformer by a step not unlike the first manifesto of Luther. If at this time he had fallen in with those passages of Wycliffe's writings in

* In Luther's Preface to his edition of Huss's Letters, published in 1537, we find the following remarkable passage: — "When I studied at Erfurt, I found in the library of the convent a book entitled The Sermons of John Huss. I had a great curiosity to know what doctrines that arch-heretic had propagated. My astonishment at the reading of them was incredible. I could not comprehend for what cause they burned so great a man, who explained the Scriptures with so much gravity and dexterity. But as the very name of Huss was held in so great abomination, that I imagined the sky would fall and the sun be darkened if I made honorable mention of him, I shut the book with no little indignation. I said to myself, by way of consolation, — 'Perhaps he wrote these things before he fell into heresy.' For I had not yet learned what had passed at the Council of Constance." The case, as Lenfant suggests, may have been the same with Huss in regard to Wycliffe's works.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which the "subtle merchandise of Antichrist's clerks" is denounced as "theft and robbery," he would hardly have insisted on the ordeal of fire and water which he had once prescribed for them. The clergy now began to bestir themselves in opposition to Wycliffe's heresies, and in 1403 vented their zeal in a formal academical condemnation of forty-five articles selected from his works; an act to which Huss seems at the time to have offered no objection.

Not long after this sentence, two Englishmen, driven from their native land by the new persecution of the Lollards, to which the recent statute *de hæretico comburendo* had been the prologue, brought to Prague several of Wycliffe's works which Huss had never seen. These men were eager to make proselytes, though their zeal was not too hot to take counsel of crafty policy. By agitating delicate questions, without directly impugning current dogmas, they sowed their grain of mustard-seed in the University and the market-place with great success. The first point in a skilful tactician's game, to trust more to the manner of a thing than the matter, they had learned to perfection. One of their devices to gain notoriety and catch the eyes of the groundlings was a species of raree-show, in which a procession of the pope and his cardinals was represented in all the pomp and circumstance of worldly glory, while the Saviour was depicted as making his entry into Jerusalem on an ass, and followed by his barefooted and meanly-clad disciples. Picture-writing of this sort was quite legible to the most illiterate peasant. Huss had made the acquaintance of these foreigners, and if, as is reported of him, he publicly commended this rather scandalous manœuvre, he could not cry foul play, when he was marked out afresh for the reprobation of the clergy, who hoped now at last to have the king on their side. But the only satisfaction they got from the jolly monarch was the quibbling reply, — "O, you must not meddle with my goose (Huss); he will lay me golden eggs one of these days." *

We next meet with Huss in quite a different scene. A storm had been long brewing within the walls of the University, which may be traced to its ill-adjusted constitution. This, as we have already hinted, was of a character to in-

* The chronology of these events is very doubtful. Some features of the story seem to point, indeed, to a later date.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flame the national jealousies of the students. To this day the traveller in Bohemia is often betrayed into a pitying smile at the intense national pride of a people whose separate existence has been so long buried in that grave of history, the Austrian Empire. The Bohemians had resented the general preference shown by Wenceslaus and his father for Germans; and the native students in the University chafed under a charter which secured to the foreign nations three votes in convocation and left them only one. They were galled, too, by their almost constant exclusion from the higher academical offices, which was the natural result of preponderating foreign influence. With the ardor of patriotic zeal thus reinforced by the pangs of mortified ambition, they were ready to assert their fancied rights as soon as a convenient season should arrive. The struggle at last came on, and assumed a form of public violence not frequent in the sequestered retreats of ordinary academic life, where the significance of the quarrel usually bears a ludicrous inverse proportion to the rancor of the combatants. The students at Prague were numbered by thousands, and peculiar circumstances, of which the course of Huss, who enjoyed unbounded favor with his countrymen, and appears to have been one of their leaders in this affair, was probably among the foremost, had inflamed the minds of both parties. In 1406, they came to blows, and an affray occurred in the market-place of Prague, in which nine were killed and several dangerously wounded. Throughout this business Huss probably experienced the usual fate of party leaders, who are generally more startled than the rest of the world by the extravagances of their followers; the leaders judging by their own intentions, and the world by the means employed. He was not a violent man, but he had violent followers.

The chief of these was his friend and fellow-martyr, Jerome of Prague, a man of superior learning and commanding eloquence, and generally acknowledged to have surpassed his master in scholarship, if not in ability. He had studied at Cologne, Heidelberg, Prague, and possibly at Oxford; and, though a layman of rank, had taken a degree in divinity. Such a yoke-fellow would have been invaluable to Huss, if to more than his master's boldness he had added the virtue which is the better part of valor. But his ardent nature made a zealot of him; nor was his value as a counsellor or

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ally enhanced by his secular condition, which left him under too little restraint. Without crediting every wild tale of violence we find recorded of a man who had many enemies, it is fair to doubt whether, on the whole, his coöperation was more useful or prejudicial to the cause of Huss. In the particular question just then at issue, Jerome gave Huss his full support; though we may conjecture that the mild authority of the preacher was often required to curb the impetuous temper of his associate. This protracted contest terminated at last in the triumph of the Bohemian party, who obtained from Wenceslaus a decree, bearing the date of September 27th, 1409, by which it was ordered, that for the future the natives should have three votes in all academical matters, while the foreigners, who were classed under the collective name of Germans, should hold but one. The publication of this decree, which is an important event in the literary history of Europe, was followed by the secession of several thousand students, who established themselves at other seats of learning, and particularly at the universities of Leipsic and Erfurt.

Though Huss had triumphed, he could not, if we believe his own words, contemplate the consequences of his success without dismay and anguish of spirit. In the heat of zeal, and under the spur of rivalry and the smart of calumny, he had doubtless seen only the necessity of victory. But a mind like his is more apt to be softened than hardened by success. "My heart," he says, "sunk within me, as I watched them filing one after another through the streets. I seemed to be abandoned of all men, and left alone in the world. One moment I would shut myself up in darkness, and in the next was in the street again. 'Stay, stay,' I cried; 'we will yet be friends.' It was all in vain." The sudden emigration of so many good customers was severely felt and long remembered by the trading class at Prague; while the refugees, on their part, preserved a lively sense of their obligations to Huss, as in the sequel he experienced to his cost. His popularity was at first shaken, though subsequent events restored him to his former place in the affections of the people. In the University he was now the chief man, and soon after the secession was made Rector.

His elevation to this high academical dignity, so far from damping his zeal as a preacher, only made him more formidable to his opponents. By this time he had probably be-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

come well known as a disciple of Wycliffe, in the dissemination of whose works among the Bohemians he is said to have taken an active part. To many of the Reformer's opinions he doubtless became a convert; or, more guardedly speaking, he found in many of them an expression and confirmation of his own views. He was never, indeed, a wholesale Wycliffite; for on several points he fell short of his master's extreme doctrines. That he did not regard himself as a revolter from the church of Rome is clear enough; and though, like Wycliffe and Luther, he insisted with great emphasis on the Scriptures as the infallible judge of right and wrong, he was by no means ready to throw the pope overboard. But before following his history farther, we must resume our sketch of ecclesiastical affairs.

The Schism had at last wearied and worried out the patience of Christendom with the accumulated miseries of a score of years, and a vigorous effort was made to bring it to an end. The University of Paris, at that time a body of very great influence both in church and state, led the way. As far back as the year 1394, it had resolved, that the great object must be effected in one of three ways: by resignation, by arbitration, or by a general council. To resignation in the abstract the militant popes were not averse; indeed, no contrivance for terminating the Schism could have been more acceptable to either than the abdication of his antagonist. But neither had the least intention of taking the first step. Their professions of readiness were liberal enough, and in one respect they resembled honest men, that their word was as good as their oath. Never was a comedy better played, and for a good while it served to amuse the credulous and elude the importunate.

Benedict XIII., the successor of Clement VII., was a master in the arts of evasion. There is an approach to sublimity in the dogged craft with which this old man obstinate kept the French court and the University of Paris at bay for twenty years. Twice, in 1398 and 1407, did the kingdom withdraw its obedience; but neither this defection of his chief supporter, nor the siege of Avignon by a French army, could break his resolute spirit. Gregory XII., who was elected by the Roman college in 1406, proposed a conference to Benedict, which of course was readily acceded to; each party having full faith in his own dishonesty, and equal

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reliance on the hypocrisy of his antagonist. The selection of a place of meeting proved an insuperable obstacle; the one insisting on its being near the sea, and the other at a reasonable distance from it. "You would have imagined one," writes Aretino, Gregory's secretary, "to be an aquatic animal, that dreaded the dry land; and the other a terrestrial one, in fear of water."

France at last determined on a bolder step, and in the spring of 1408 declared herself neutral between the pretenders; her example was followed by Germany, Hungary, and Bohemia. The University of Paris still continued its exertions, though the miserable state of the kingdom, almost without a king, and distracted with civil feuds, greatly embarrassed its operations. The way of resignation (*via cessionis*) was now out of the question; nor would the rivals even agree on an arbiter; a general council was the only hope of Gerson and his allies in the University. The cardinals of both "obediences" were urged in the strongest manner by the University and the king of France to abandon the pontiffs. Weary, like the rest of the world, of vexation and strife, and sick of trial and privation, they at last consented, met together, and convoked a general council. It opened at Pisa, in the spring of 1409, and presented an imposing array of ecclesiastics and ambassadors from different parts of Europe. It held twenty-four sessions, at the fifteenth of which both the popes were solemnly deposed as backsliders, heretics, and perjurers; and at a subsequent meeting a new pontiff was elected, who took the title of Alexander V. But the Schism was not over. Spain, Portugal, and Scotland still held out for Benedict, and Gregory rejoiced in a few towns of Italy and Germany. The œcumenical seamsters had only made the rent worse. The Janus had become a Cerberus; the triangle of infallibles was complete.

From one of Huss's letters we learn that he took the part of the seceding cardinals, and endeavoured to persuade the Bohemians to adopt a similar course. This drew down upon him the wrath of Sbinko, Archbishop of Prague, the A B C doctor, as the Hussites called him, in acknowledgment of his learning; he still held out for Gregory, and now showed his zeal for his master by interdicting Huss from preaching. But after the Council of Pisa, the enlightened prelate withdrew his opposition, and Huss had a short

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

breathing-space. Yet he was not idle ; his pulpit still rang with denunciations of the corruption of the times. Nor were his enemies asleep ; he soon had news from them by the way of Bologna, and under the hand and seal of no worse a voucher than Pope Alexander himself. The amiable abecedarian had the satisfaction at last to receive a papal bull, dated December 20th, 1409, which, without naming Huss, was evidently levelled at him. By this bull, it was forbidden to preach in private chapels, and to teach the doctrines of Wycliffe in any place whatsoever ; and the archbishop was ordered to proceed against heretics, and suppress the books of Wycliffe. Huss, in answer to this bull, adopted an expedient which had been recently employed by a college of cardinals, and was imitated a century later by Luther ; he appealed from Alexander ill informed to Alexander better informed. In the mean time, Sbinko, having called in more than two hundred volumes of Wycliffe's works, made a great bonfire of them in the court-yard of his palace, to the infinite offence, not only of the members of the University, whose privileges were thereby violated, and of the other owners of the books, many of which were of great value and highly decorated, but of the royal family and the people. The archbishop's fame was celebrated in squibs and pasquinades, and serious riots took place in the streets. The abecedarian, in the next place, read Huss a characteristic lecture on various points of doctrine, to which he meekly replied, that, if he had spoken any thing contrary to the Scriptures, he would do better in future. On the next Sunday, however, he stigmatized the archbishop's proceedings as against God, against right, and against reason. The disorders in the city continued, and Jerome, who returned about this time from a journey to Poland, in the course of which he had suffered a short imprisonment at Vienna on a charge of heresy, is said to have out-Jeromed himself in them.

An attempt having next been made to enforce the interdict against Huss's pulpit, he appealed to the pope, under whom, and not under the archbishop, he declared that he held his place as university preacher. In consequence either of this appeal, or of a fresh movement of his enemies, he was honored with the notice of his Holiness John XXIII., the successor of Alexander V., and one, if we may credit a tithe of what was charged upon him at the Council of Con-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stance, worthy to be the enemy of John Huss. The pontiff referred the case to a cardinal, who cited the appellant to appear at Bologna, then the seat of the papal court. Huss's friends, and among them the king and queen, interfered to prevent so dangerous a journey, and an embassy was sent to the pope to entreat him to dispense with his appearance in person, and appoint delegates to investigate the matter at Prague. Huss, also, on his part, sent advocates to plead his cause. The fears of his friends were justified; for though a reconciliation was effected between Huss and Sbinko, and the latter had the pleasure of writing to the pope, that he had been unable to detect any heresies in Bohemia, the agents of Huss were imprisoned, and in due time he himself was excommunicated, and Prague laid under an interdict which was to continue so long as he remained there. The publication of a sentence which shut up the churches, and suspended the rites of baptism and burial, fell like a thunderbolt on the superstitious populace, and threw the city into frightful commotion.

The persecution of Huss had now begun, and the church of Rome, without pausing to count the cost, had committed itself to a struggle, which was not terminated till one of the bloodiest tragedies in the annals of popular vengeance had involved the innocent and the guilty in a common woe. The conduct of Huss himself in this exigency is worthy of high praise. He had been most unjustly traduced, his agents imprisoned, his rights violated, and, worse than all, his pulpit, the only home he knew, had been closed against him. And yet not a breath of revenge, though he held the fate of Bohemia in his hand, seems to have stirred within him; his bitterest pang was that of being torn from his beloved flock. Nor could he bring himself to this separation without great misgiving; but satisfied at last that the cause of peace required his departure, and having first solemnly appealed from the pretended excommunication of the pontiffs, scribes, pharisees, and judges, seated in the chair of Moses, to Jesus Christ, his master and his judge, he withdrew to his native village of Hussinetz, where he placed himself under the protection of its feudal lord.

Twenty-two years before, in the full flush of boyish hope, he had left that humble home, with hardly a friend in the world, but without a foe. He came back now, a bruised

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reed, which potentates and powers, and the wise men of the earth, were moving sea and land to break. He was then at peace with all men, and with himself. Now, he had been cut off like a leper from the company of his people, and a warfare was going on within him, of which he could not see the end. He had gone too far to escape, what is perhaps the severest trial of an honest reformer, the internal strife between habitual reverence and conscientious doubt, between the desire to retain all that can be retained, and the obligation to receive new truth, whencesoever it may come. The symptoms of this struggle are clearly discernible in more than one of his writings. Without renouncing his allegiance to the church, and indeed with the most positive professions of loyalty, he had been led on to reject abuse after abuse, and add opinion to opinion, till he had become the declared advocate of what appeared to many a heterodox system, though to himself it was no new system at all, but only a return to the primitive purity of the true faith. It was perfectly natural that the holders of an old superstition should regard him who denied it as the author of new doctrines; and he must himself have been sometimes shaken in his position, when he saw the difficulty of rending away excrescences without tearing out the very flesh and sinew of the ecclesiastical body. Some of the opinions, too, which he had found in Wycliffe's works, about obedience to magistrates, the tenure of church property, and other delicate points, were not safe without qualification. If true in the abstract, they were likely to become false in the mouths of ignorant and violent men, who would either misconceive their meaning, or misapply them to diabolical ends. This view of the case may not have troubled our reformer much; for a very small spice of enthusiasm will persuade a man that he must proclaim the truth on the housetops, and leave consequences, as the phrase is, to God; — a species of heroism this, which makes a virtue of rashness, and impiously buries in the earth the talent of prudence, that great auxiliary of virtue, saying to him who gave it, "Lo, there thou hast that is thine." This way of persuading one's self that good seed will always produce good fruit is very comfortable, and saves the trouble of looking out for a good soil. And yet we must not judge such cases too harshly. A noble mind almost instinctively identifies itself with the truth to which it has attained, and is apt to deem it

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a shame and a sin to deny others the full sunlight in which it basks itself. It has found a cool fountain from which it draws refreshment and strength; and is it strange that it offers the draught without stint to the wayfarer, not thinking that its coldness may be death to his heated frame? In fact, the world seems indebted to a certain blindness to consequences for some of the most salutary reforms. Yet how many other enterprises of great pith and moment have miserably failed, merely because the manner in which they were executed shocked the moral sense of mankind more than the evils they were intended to remove! It would, indeed, be most unfair to hold Wycliffe to account for the extravagances of John Ball, or Luther for the frenzy of the Thuringian peasants, or Huss for the hideous barbarities of the Hussite war. It would be a crying injustice to yield the enemies of reform every argument they may choose to draw from the ill effects of revolutions, which would have come earlier and more smoothly, if they themselves had not dammed up their course. Still, it may be that a little more moderation, somewhat more prudence, and zeal more fully leavened with charity, would have enabled the Reformers to guide off a portion at least of the dangerous current. It cannot be, that Huss, for a time out of earshot of the hoarse murmurs of the metropolitan multitude, did not sometimes regret the violence of his followers; but whether he repented of his own loud and bold exhortations is doubtful; at all events, we find him preaching about from village to village, and sparing neither pope nor cardinals. Yet in all this he did not lose the native mildness of his character. A letter of his, written about this time to the college of cardinals, is preserved, most moderate and submissive in tone, though without a hint of compromise or a sign of surrender. Several letters, also, to his church at Prague are extant, which are full of affectionate interest and ardent piety; and if we find a slight tincture of that polemical gall which may collect in a naturally generous and gentle nature, there is a long distance between these rare ebullitions and the settled malice of venomous hatred.

It was, perhaps, the death of his enemy Sbinko, which brought him back to Prague. This dignitary, finding that the removal of the brand which set the fire had not extinguished the conflagration, and despairing of reducing the tur-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bulent Praguers to order, set off to seek Sigismund, now emperor of Germany, and to implore his aid. His death, which took place on the journey, though it freed Huss from an opponent, did him some injury ; as the Hussites were charged, though falsely, with having taken off the archbishop by poison ; a suspicion which of course aggravated the hostility already existing. A state of things like this evidently needed no new element of disorder. But it was Huss's fate to live in an atmosphere of confusion, and he was soon more deeply embroiled than ever with his numerous foes, at home and abroad.

Among the deplorable mischiefs of the Schism, we have already mentioned the countenance it afforded to the quarrels among temporal powers. The contest for the throne of Naples still existed ; the claimants being now Louis II. of Anjou and Ladislaus of Hungary. This Ladislaus had the nine points of the law in his favor, and from his neighbourhood to Rome had been a thorn in the side of the pope. He still adhered to Gregory XII., the schismatic pope, and of course the rival pontiff went for the rival prince. At last, Pope John, being in great lack of temporal apparatus, determined to put his spiritual engines in play, and, in the latter part of 1411, launched a brace of bulls against Ladislaus, excommunicating him and his children to the third generation, inviting all believers of both sexes to aid in a crusade of extermination against him, and promising to all true penitents who should engage in it the same indulgences which had been awarded to crusaders to the Holy Land. The promulgation of these bulls in Bohemia threw the kingdom into a ferment. Huss prepared and published a formal refutation of them, which, though written with great boldness, was free from unseemly violence. He takes his stand upon the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church, and having contrasted the words and acts of Christ with the commands of the pope, declares that he would not, without a new revelation, raise his hand against Ladislaus and his partisans, and announces his opinion, that Christ, his mother, and his disciples were greater than the pope and his cardinals. He proceeds to attack indulgences, to explain the power of the keys, which, he says, supposes the proper use of the keys, and maintains, that, if the pope abuses his power, it is a duty

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to resist him, and that it is better to suffer an unjust excommunication than to receive a pretended absolution.*

With the people Huss lost nothing by this declaration of disobedience; but his interest at court was considerably damaged. For though it was generally the policy of princes to dishonor, as far as possible, the papal drafts on their territories, Wenceslaus happened to be just then on ill terms with Ladislaus, and was willing to be backed by the power of Rome. The magistrates of the city, too, naturally desirous to secure the public peace, the clergy with a budget of old grudges against him, and even the heads of the University, took part with the court.† Huss next appointed a public discussion of two theses on the crusade, and invited all who pleased to take part in it.

On the appointed day, the 7th of June, 1412, a great concourse assembled, and a stormy scene followed. The conduct of Huss is said to have been marked by moderation and composure; but his friend Jerome was more violent. The next day, a furious tumult arose, and Huss and Jerome were sent for to appease the rage of the rioters. They professed their willingness to do so; but in the mean time the pope's collectors continued to preach up the crusade, and on the next Sunday, in three different churches, were interrupted by as many Hussites, one of whom gave the preacher the lie. These men were taken into custody, and it was feared they would be put to death. A new tumult broke out, and two thousand persons, students and others, collected in the public square, with arms in their hands. Huss, at the head of a body of men, proceeded to the council-house, and demanded of the magistrates that the lives of the prisoners should be spared. He received the equivocal answer, that his intercession should influence the result. On the strength of this slender assurance, he returned to the market-place, and dispersed the mob with the grateful news, that the pris-

* A man who has a practical point to carry often states opinions and doctrines in broader or looser terms than he would use, if the controversy were about purely speculative opinions. It is but fair, then, to make an allowance for this excess. We must hear Huss, when in another place he asserts that he does not deny the power given by God to the pope of Rome. He did oppose the improper use or sale of indulgences.

† Huss's rectorship had expired some time before, though we find no evidence as to the exact date of its termination.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

oners would be pardoned. But by and by a dreadful rumor spread through the city, that blood had been seen to flow from the prison. A second and still fiercer riot ensued. The doors of the prison were burst open, and there, indeed, the multitude beheld with dismay the headless bodies of their murdered friends. Their fury all at once subsided, and having wrapped the corpses in linen shrouds, they formed a funeral procession and bore them to the vault of the Bethlehem Chapel, where they were buried with the honors of saints.

At the moment of the execution, Huss is said to have been absent from the city ; but he took an early opportunity to celebrate the victims as saints and martyrs.* This tragic affair produced the greatest excitement throughout Bohemia, and from this time Huss's attacks on the pope and priests seem to have increased in violence, and his appeals to the authority of the Scriptures to have grown louder and louder. The entire kingdom became more and more impregnated with his doctrines, though they were opposed with the greatest obstinacy by the clergy, who laid hold of certain tenets relating to tithes, which Huss, like Wycliffe, regarded as nothing but alms,† and of his extreme views in respect to civil and ecclesiastical rulers living in sin, whom he held to be virtually deposed from their offices.‡ It made their ears tingle to hear Jesus Christ, and not the pope, called the head of the church ; and they looked with crestfallen regret on their crosiers and mitres, and palls and rings, when they were told that every deacon and priest might preach without papal or episcopal ordination. The tide of controversy ran

* In these disorders, the zeal of Jerome was not altogether according to discretion. He is said to have put two prostitutes into a cart, and having hung the papal bulls about their necks and disguised some men as monks, to have marched in procession to the public place of execution, where he burned the bulls in the sight of the multitude. It is but fair to say, that he denied this at the Council of Constance. As to Huss, the following passage from his sermons probably expresses his sincere sentiments : — "If you would overturn the pope's throne, you had better not throw great stones. They make too much noise. The watchman wakes and is on his guard. Let us take small stones, and the building will totter by little and little, and fall like the tower of Babylon." But he could not always take the great stones out of the hands of his followers.

† This doctrine was doubtless one of the golden eggs which Wenceslaus valued his goose for.

‡ This last doctrine he afterwards held with a modification which made it less odious.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so high at length, that Huss found it expedient once more to retire into the country.*

About this time, and perhaps during his retirement, he wrote several notable treatises. The chief of these, and indeed of all his works, is that on "The Church," which is an epitome of his peculiar views and doctrines. It was publicly read in his chapel, and was afterwards used by his enemies as a quiver from which they drew their sharpest arrows against him. The obloquy and persecution which had been showered on him had now begun to produce some of their sinister effects. Several of his later works are marked by a degree of sourness and indelicacy, which, if they were characteristic of the age, also prove that he was not so far in advance of his age as he might and should have been. The authorship of the most offensive of these, that on the "Anatomy of the Members of Antichrist," has, indeed, been disputed, and we hope with reason.

But events were now maturing which were to change entirely the scene and form of his trials, and bring him back, by the wholesome ministrations of physical suffering and the approach of martyrdom, to his native gentleness and simplicity. The meeting of the Council of Constance drew nigh, and Huss was summoned to appear before it.

It was the object of this famous council to accomplish what that of Pisa had failed to effect; namely, the extinction of the Schism and the reformation of the clergy. But the friends of a council were also bent on the suppression of heresy, as an indispensable means for the proposed union of the divided church. The infallibility of the church was to be maintained with as much obstinacy as the fallibility of the pope; and the man who appealed from both parties to the authority of the Scriptures was hardly less odious to Gerson and his friends, than the deposed popes themselves. The alleged heresies of Huss were bruited all over Europe, and it was deemed necessary to summon him to Constance to answer for them. There was good ground to hope that the experiment of a council would prove more successful than before; for Sigismund was now emperor of Germany, and was bent on the restoration of concord to the harassed

* It is doubtful whether he was twice banished. The chronology of this period is too loose to enable us to settle the point.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

church. A great obstacle to the success of the Council of Pisa had been the refusal of the Emperor Robert to acknowledge the validity of its decrees. But Sigismund was a bigot, and as active as he was bigoted. If the devotee had needed the spur of selfishness, the noise of Turkish hordes on the borders of his kingdom of Hungary sounding ever in his ears urged him to unite the entire company of the faithful against the hosts of the infidel. He resolved to obtain the consent of Pope John to the convocation of a council in an imperial city, where Roman policy would have less sway than on Italian soil. John's desire to regain possession of Rome, then in the power of his enemy Ladislaus, which was impossible without Sigismund's assistance, forced him to submit to the choice of the city of Constance, which his legates, much against his wishes, had accepted as the place of meeting. A conference was held between the pope and emperor, the former appearing in full pontifical attire, and the latter in the plain habit of a deacon. Constance having been named, "Holy Father," said Sigismund, "does this city suit you?" "Yes, my dear son," John replied, with a shudder, "it does suit me." He might well shudder; for in the bold claim of infallibility for the church rather than the pope, and the assertion of a right to depose popes for just cause, he foresaw, with the unerring instinct of crafty wickedness, his own approaching fall. But it was too late to recede, though the sudden death of Ladislaus was a strong temptation to try it; he issued the bull of convocation, and Sigismund published an edict appointing November 1, 1414, as the time for opening the council.*

* There are various chronological difficulties in the life of Huss up to his departure for Constance. Bonnechose seems to rely mainly on Lenfant, to whom he is more indebted throughout than he acknowledges, and is apparently unacquainted with German authorities, of which we profess to have met with little more than the titles, with the exception of the work named at the head of our article, and even that we quote with some hesitation, as it is written for moral effect, and has here and there a romantic tone. There must be documents relative to Bohemian history, which would throw light on this subject. For the remainder of Huss's life we have his own letters and the acts of the council, for the latter of which the admirable history of the council by Lenfant is excellent authority. Of the correctness of Bonnechose's version of the letters we are unable to judge with much certainty from an English re-translation. We have, however, compared the English letters with such Latin ones as we could find. There are some ludicrous blunders in these; but how many belong to Bonnechose, and how many to Mr. Mackenzie, we cannot say; though we

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Huss was confined to his bed by sickness, when his summons to the council was brought to him. He started up at once, threw on his clothes, seized his papers, and seemed about to prepare for the journey, as if he had forgotten that November was yet so far off. "Do you not see," he cried to a bystander, "that this news has made me well again?" But he found his friends at Prague in a very different frame of mind. They saw slight cause, indeed, for joy in the exposure of a beloved friend and revered instructer to almost certain death. That Huss himself began by degrees, as the fever of enthusiasm abated, to comprehend the full extent of the danger, is apparent from letters written to his friends just before his departure. In one of these, addressed to the Bohemians, he speaks of his enemies in the council as being more numerous than those of Christ had been, and prays that God will enable him to face without fear temptation, imprisonment, and the pains of a cruel death. His enemies, too, had made their calculation of chances, and were quite content to leave him, without further molestation at home, to the tender mercies of the council. Two of the bitterest among them, Stephen Paletz and Michael Caussis, were to go to Constance to press his condemnation. The time of his departure now approached. In October, 1414, he took his last leave of the Bethlehem Chapel, the home of his heart, which had indeed been to him "his joy and his throne." As he left the city, he was accompanied by several of his friends. "Dear master," were Jerome's last words, "be firm; should I learn that thou hast fallen into any peril, I will fly forthwith to thy assistance." An humble artisan took leave of him with the words, — "Very dear master John, may God be with you; I can hardly hope that you will return safe and sound." The scene reminds us of the parting between Paul and the elders of the Ephesian church. Huss, too, had reason to fear that bonds and afflictions were abiding him. He, too, had not shunned to declare unto his flock all the counsel of God, and might now say, — "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself." His heart-broken friends, as they fell on his neck and kissed him, like the disciples of the Apostle, sorrowed most of all that they should see his face no more.

---

think the latter could establish a claim to originality in a few cases at least.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He had received from Wenceslaus a safe-conduct through his dominions, and an escort of noblemen to accompany him to Constance. One of these, John de Chlum, deserves to be held in everlasting honor for the heroic and devoted faithfulness with which, in the midst of foes and through all manner of ill-report, he clung to his persecuted and forsaken teacher. Other friends probably went with him; for his train, an imposing procession for a poor priest, consisted of thirty horses and several carriages. On his way, he was met by a safe-conduct from Sigismund, in which all the subjects of the empire were enjoined to allow him "to pass, stop, sojourn, and *return* without hindrance"; a notable document, which has damned its author to eternal fame. The journey, which occupied twenty-three days, was performed on horseback, and in the most public manner. Huss, of course, was not silent, but availed himself of every opportunity to deliver addresses in Latin or German in the towns through which he passed. He seems to have excited the greatest curiosity and interest everywhere, especially at Nuremberg, where his reception was of the most gratifying character. Writing from this place to his congregation, he tells them that he has not met thus far with an enemy, and has been well received wherever he stopped.

When he came in sight of the towers of Constance, if we may believe our German biographer, a sudden thrill of fear came over him, which he soon repressed with the trustful exclamation, — "If God is for us, who can be against us? They may make me suffer; but the doctrine which I preach is beyond their power." A week before, Pope John, as he approached the city and looked down from a ridge of the Tyrol into the valley below, had uttered the prophetic words, — "Ah, I see how it is; yonder is the pit where they catch the foxes." The fox was indeed caught, and the heretic was made to suffer; but the weed of heresy survived the fire, and a century later was strong enough to choke the choicest flowers in the papal garden. Huss and his friends took lodgings in the great square of Constance, near the pope's hotel, at the house of a widow named Fida (*Faith*, as Fox the Martyrologist rejoices to call her), who is compared by Huss himself to the woman of Sarepta, that received Elijah. The next day the pope was informed of his arrival, and promised him his protection, though he could not be per-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suaded to give it in writing. For nearly a month Huss seems to have been almost unmolested. He passed his time in writing home, in conversing with those who came to his house to hear him, and in composing a treatise or two. He prepared two sermons, which have been preserved, and are said to be of great excellence, with the intention of preaching them in public. But it would never do to allow so dangerous a man to gain popularity, and to prove to the world that he was no more of a heretic than many of the doctors at the council, who gloried in their untarnished orthodoxy. His enemies from Bohemia improved the interval, and made a compilation of certain articles which they pretended to have taken from his works, and showed busily about to such of the clergy as they happened to meet. Huss, as it seems, was not allowed to preach his sermons, and on the twenty-sixth day after his arrival was summoned to appear before the pope and cardinals. He went, attended by his friend John de Chlum. The cardinals, having examined him and retired to deliberate on his case, yielded at last to the importunity of his accusers,* and delivered him into the custody of a guard of soldiers, who had been posted at a convenient distance, and by whom he was conveyed to the house of an official of the cathedral. Here he remained for a week in confinement. In the mean time, his friend Chlum, full of indignation at this gross injustice, hurried to the pope for redress; and, being repulsed there, informed the emperor, who had not yet arrived at Constance, of the indignity which had been put upon him by this barefaced violation of his safe-conduct. Sigismund shook with rage when he heard it, and sent written orders to have Huss set at liberty on the instant. The orders were never executed, but on the 5th of December Huss was removed to a damp and noisome vault in the prison of the Dominican monastery.

Sigismund did not make his entry into Constance till the morning of Christmas day. In the mean time, the town and its environs had been filling up with strangers from all parts of Europe, who had flocked thither for business or out of curiosity, to the number, according to one estimate, of a

* To one of the cardinals, who wished to leave Huss at liberty for the present, Paletz addressed the convincing argument, — "My lord cardinal, if Huss's doctrine prevails, you can hardly continue a cardinal."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hundred thousand. Coronets, red hats, and mitres, which owe so much of their value to their rarity, and are therefore not given to gregarious habits, were to be seen there in most vulgar abundance. As if, too, to show how small was the sum of the wisdom of the age, the scholars of Europe had gathered in mass. The hangers-on of a council, like those of a camp-meeting, are a significant part of the great crowd, and we have statistical enumerations of cooks, barbers, common-women, and other signs of civilization. The first measures of the council must have appeared to the pope very like the preparations for the fox-hunt he so much dreaded. It was resolved that the delegates should vote by nations; a proceeding which palsied the right arm of papal patronage. It was also voted, that the secular dignitaries should have a voice as well as the clergy; another blow at pontifical influence. The arrival of Sigismund, instead of arresting the course of the pope's antagonists, only emboldened them the more. They were resolved on pushing John to an abdication. He endeavoured to elude the danger by fleeing from the city, hoping thus to break up the council. But the firmness of Sigismund, who had determined to sustain the council, prevented its dissolution; and the miserable pontiff was finally deposed. These transactions, however, occupied several months. We return to Huss.

By the scanty rays of light which found their way into his gloomy dungeon, he was able to write from time to time to his friends in Bohemia, and to draw up a few practical tracts for the use of his jailers, who had become much attached to their meek and patient prisoner. His health at last gave way; he suffered under the most horrible attacks of the stone, to which he had never before been subject, and was reduced by a fever to great extremity. In this deplorable state he writes: — "If you should see me, you would pity me. I have scarcely any rest from pain. It presses me together like a worm, and rolls me about on my miserable pallet. And yet pity me not, for I fear that I may be reserved for much greater sufferings, unless death first comes to my relief." In the mean time, he received a visit from three commissioners, sent by the pope to examine him on certain charges which his indefatigable accusers had preferred against him; an act of Christian charity, doubtless, for he was "sick and in prison," and did they not "visit" him? Nor

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was it a mere call of ceremony. They came to cheer his dull sense with fresh proofs of the malice of his foes, and when the lonely man, sick with hope deferred and crushed by disease, applied for the aid of a professional advocate, he was told, in language which showed that he had fallen into pious hands, that the canons of the church forbade every one to defend the cause of a heretic. "I besought the commissioners," he writes, "to allow me an advocate. They at first granted my request, but afterwards refused it. I therefore put my trust in the Saviour Jesus Christ. May he be my advocate and judge!" After a captivity of two months in this prison, where the pangs of disease were aggravated to a degree which to his nature must have been intolerable, by his inability to face and confound his accusers in public, he was removed to the Franciscan prison, where he remained till the pope's escape from Constance. At one time, his disorder had assumed so alarming a form, that the pope, either out of pity or from reluctance to lose the victim by a natural death, sent his own physician to attend him.

The news of his imprisonment was received at Prague with greater indignation than astonishment; for, as we learn from Huss himself, he had been warned by several persons in Bohemia not to rely on the safe-conduct. Nor could the letters which came from him, so full of sweet resignation, of abiding affection and heroic firmness, be read without tears of grief and rage by the multitude of friends he had left behind. Letters were despatched by the nobles of Bohemia to Sigismund, remonstrating in the strongest terms against his breach of princely faith. But that monarch, hemmed in by a fence of bristling crosiers, had imbibed, with the ready absorption of a bigot, the subtile poison of priestly sophistry, instilling into his ear the glozing suggestion that he need not keep faith with a heretic; that he had no right to grant the safe-conduct without the consent of the council; and that the council could absolve him from his promise. It was a rare case of special pleading, by which it appears, first, that the promise was invalid in its inception, secondly, that he had a right to break it, thirdly, that the council could give him leave to break it. This triple cord was too strong to be broken, and Huss's doom was sealed. The pope's officers, after their master's flight, which took place in the latter part of March, 1415, gave up the custody of Huss; and he was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

transferred to the castle of Gotleben on the banks of the Rhine, where he was chained with irons on his feet, and at night fixed to his bed by another chain which was riveted to the wall. Rather more than two months afterwards, the deposed pope was brought a prisoner to the same castle, for fear that the serpent's fangs had not been quite drawn. Huss probably never saw his fellow-captive ; but he knew of his fate, and found in it a triumphant confirmation of his own doctrines ; for he could now say, as matter of fact, that Christendom was without a head on earth, and possessed Jesus Christ alone as a chief to direct it.

The deposal of Pope John was voted at the twelfth session of the council ; the eighth, which was held on the fifth of May, was occupied with the reading and condemnation of Wycliffe's works. This was a fit prelude to the trial of Huss, and almost a prejudging of his case, inasmuch as the most offensive doctrines of the Bohemian were to be found in the writings of his English forerunner. The emperor was present, a cardinal presided, and a patriarch celebrated mass. The passage from the Gospels beginning, " Beware of false prophets," was read by way of preparation for the day's work. A bishop preached a sermon from the text, " The Spirit will guide you into all truth," in the course of which he spoke thus of the pope : — " Blessed be the soul of our lord the pope, but cursed be his flesh ; for he is guilty of as great a lie, as if I should say, God is not one and three." Forty-five articles, purporting to be taken from Wycliffe's writings, which had been scotched, but not killed, by a pair of prior condemnations, were then read, and condemned a third time. Two hundred and sixty more were put under the same ban, and finally all his books, good, bad, and indifferent, in general and particular, were cast after them. One act of magnanimity yet remained. Thirty years before, the arch-heretic had received Christian burial, and his bones still infested the consecrated resting-place of the true sons of the church. They must be unearthed. The council accordingly proceeded to condemn his memory, and ordered his bones to be dug up and thrown on a dunghill.* As if to

* This sentence lay dormant for several years. Fuller, in his Church History, has detailed the proceedings of the zealots who at length disturbed the bones of the Reformer. " They burnt them," he tells us, " to ashes,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

supply whatever might be wanting to precipitate Huss's condemnation, in the month of April Jerome had imprudently shown himself at Constance without a safe-conduct. He soon took alarm, however, and set out for Bohemia. But he was apprehended on the way and brought back in chains to Constance. On May 23d, his examination before a general ecclesiastical congregation took place. He conducted himself with great intrepidity and self-possession, though assailed by the scholastic zeal of Gerson, and almost stunned by the outcries of infuriated enemies. The assembly at length broke up, and Jerome was consigned to a dungeon, where he was most cruelly treated. From this prison he was led, a year later, to the stake.

The way was now open for Huss. A dreary winter and a joyless spring had passed away, the smiting heats of summer had bowed him down, and thus long he had waited for the poor boon of a public audience, which had been withheld, as if the delay were a favor, instead of a sentence of imprisonment, weariness, and sorrow. How ardently he longed for an opportunity to face his accusers appears in such phrases as these: — "O, why am I not led forth to the funeral pile, rather than thus prevented from being heard?" "Rather than be thus basely stifled, I prefer to have my body burned with fire; I am anxious that every Christian shall know what are my last words." His time at last arrived. His public examination was appointed for the 5th of June, though not till after an attempt had been made to get him condemned without a hearing. This scandalous manœuvre was baffled by the prompt intervention of his faithful countrymen, whose remonstrances had such an effect on Sigismund, that he compelled the hasty judges to submit to the tedious process of an open audience. A deputation had already been sent to Gotleben, to examine the prisoner in secret, in order to draw from him a recantation, or at least an avowal of heretical opinions. But though, as he tells us, he suffered greatly

and cast them into Swift, a neighbouring brook running hard by. Thus this brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." The best comment on this fanatical act is that of Fox, who says, it might have made Democritus weep or Heraclitus laugh. Wordsworth, in one of his sonnets, has versified the passage above quoted from Fuller.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the insults of his tormenters, he neither lost his temper, nor was betrayed into any imprudent concession.

Glad, however, as he was to obtain a public hearing, he was well aware of the change in his prospects since the day when the summons to Constance had lifted him as by a miracle from a bed of sickness. The question, as he clearly perceived, was no longer an open one. In a letter written about this time he says, — "All was decided by the council, previously to my being thrown into prison." He knew also, that he had been stigmatized in a document published by the commissioners appointed to examine his case as a heretic and a seducer of the people. It was, indeed, too late for argument or rhetoric, or the persuasive power of simple innocence, to save him. He was surrounded by a network of hostile influences, too strong to be broken through. As a denouncer of clerical corruption, he had probably dealt too familiarly with the dignity of the order to be forgiven. He was, moreover, a stumbling-block in the way of union; for he would not admit the infallibility of the council, the great instrument of union. He was a miniature Wycliffe; and the council, by the sweeping sentence passed on the master, had committed itself to the condemnation of the disciple. He was a Realist, and the Parisian Nominalists were not on that account disposed to look leniently on his other delinquencies. There were Germans at Constance, some of whom had not forgotten the shame and confusion of the memorable secession from the University of Prague. Besides, the past and present troubles in Bohemia, with the fear of future disorders, urged the friends of peace to remove the author of them. We need only add the vague and slippery character of the crime of heresy, the most intelligible definition of which is, a substitution of private opinion for the doctrine of the universal church, and it is evident at once how little was to be hoped for from a body which, calling itself the church universal, had only to declare its disallowance of an article to make that article *ipso facto* heretical. The plaintiff became his own judge, and woe to the defendant.

On the 5th of June, the cardinals, prelates, and a large body of the inferior clergy, met at the Franciscan monastery, to which Huss had been brought back from Gotleben. The prisoner was introduced. Months of severe confinement, and the pains of sharp disease, had deepened the paleness of those

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thin, but not harsh features, whose mild expression so attracts us in his portrait. But the signature of suffering upon the human countenance, which more than tears or moving speech goes straight to the heart of a fellow-man, was lost upon these cruel inquisitors. He was left to stand awhile in a corner of the hall, till his judges had sated themselves with gazing on him. His books were then shown to him, and acknowledged to be his. The reading of articles against him commenced. But as soon as he attempted to reply, he was interrupted by such an uproar, that he could not be heard. "I thought," he said, "that the council had possessed more good-breeding, charity, and discipline." After waiting a little, he appealed to the Holy Scriptures. The outcry grew more furious. "That is not the question," was the clamor. The scene has been described by Luther in his rough way. "They all," says he, "began to rage like wild boars; the bristles of their backs stood on an end; they wrinkled their brows and whetted their tusks." The assembly broke up in confusion. After two days they met again, and this time, the emperor being present, preserved tolerable decency; though, when Huss declared that he would willingly have his soul where Wycliffe was, he was greeted with a roar of laughter. He was charged with holding Wycliffe's errors. This he denied, not regarding as errors those doctrines of Wycliffe which he himself professed. On these and other points the examination continued for some time, and was finally adjourned to the next day. As Huss was retiring, Sigismund, still uneasy at his own equivocal position, called him back and endeavoured by persuasions and threats to induce him to submit unreservedly to the authority of the council. He replied, that he was perfectly ready to retract, if any thing better than his own doctrine could be shown him. In the third audience, a long list of articles, professing to be taken from Huss's works, were read. Some he acknowledged, some he denied, and some he defended. An attempt was made to induce him to confess his errors, to abjure them, and swear never to teach them. He could not confess an error till it was proved to be such, and he could not abjure what he had been falsely charged with maintaining. The emperor, provoked by his obstinacy, declared, that, if he did not recant, he ought to be burned to death. Huss made no reply, and was remanded to prison, whither the faithful John de Chlum attended him.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When he arrived there, he was so exhausted with illness and fatigue that he could scarcely stand. Thus ended the three audiences, throughout which all the arts and assaults of his adversaries had not been able to shake his firmness in the smallest point. As a man and a Christian he had no cause to blush for his bearing on those trying days. It was what might have been expected from the patient but determined tone of his letters. In these admirable writings, so full of piety, of affection, and of resignation, we see the genuine goodness of his nature. Never for a moment does he think of a compromise with his persecutors. Constant, but not obstinate, severe, but not vindictive, ready to die for the truth, but not ambitious of the parade of martyrdom, he excites our admiration, while he hardly seems to need our pity. If his phrases are sometimes harsh, they do not seem to be the utterance of personal spite, but the plain, unmeasured speech of one who identifies himself with the cause for which he suffers. That they are not more bitter is amazing, when we remember his wrongs and his woes.

His condemnation, though yet delayed in the hope of pressing him to an abjuration of his errors, was virtually decreed. How far he was a heretic, we will not undertake to say. Nor are we prepared to deny that some of his doctrines were erroneous, and possibly unsafe. But that he was an honest man, and a much better man than many of his judges, we have no doubt; and, as he said of Wycliffe, we are quite ready to say of him, — "We should be willing to have our souls where he is." Nor is it necessary to pass too severe a sentence on the acts of the council. The horror of heresy in those days was extreme, and perhaps most intense with those who felt themselves to be nearest its verge. To pursue it with all the terrors of the church was to make their own lapse less possible, and at the same time to vindicate their orthodoxy in the eyes of the world. The brutality, too, of public assemblies is proverbial, and, shameful as it is, must not be regarded as a fair index of private character. Be that as it may, these scandalous condemnations, like the old state trials for treason, leave one agreeable impression on the mind, — a sense of gratitude, that such things have had their day; and the consoling reflection, that the blood of political and religious martyrs, in exciting the indignation of mankind against such enormities, has not been without fruit.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The sands of life were now running low, but the trials of the victim were not over. He was beset again and again with exhortations to recant, to which he ever returned the same constant refusal. He asked for a confessor, and chose Paletz, his greatest adversary. Instead of Paletz, a monk was sent, from whom he received absolution. Paletz, however, visited him once more, to urge him to abjure his errors. The meeting was a very affecting one. Huss asked pardon of Paletz for some words which he had uttered before the council. Paletz pressed him to recant. Huss calmly refused, and in the most gentle manner reproved his countryman, once his friend, for his cruel treatment of him. Paletz was moved to tears. On the 24th of June it was resolved to condemn his books to the flames, in the hope that he might thus be induced to yield. But this sentence produced no effect. The day of his own condemnation not having been fixed, several of his last letters are written in the expectation of death, which might come upon him at any time. Though now and then his heart sinks within him, as he dwells on his approaching fate, these struggles are soon over, and his spirit returns to its wonted constancy. He takes the most affectionate leave of his friends, dividing among them his books and garments, giving kind advice to such as need it, and remembering with especial interest his Bethlehem flock. He prays God to forgive his enemies, and hopes that more vigorous champions of the truth will be raised up after him. His last letter, in which he takes his farewell of some of his friends, ends with the wish, — "May Gallus" (his successor at the Bethlehem chapel) "preach the word of God to you; and may all of you, my beloved, listen attentively to it and keep it in your hearts!"

On the 6th of July he completed his forty-second year. On the same day he was condemned and burned at the stake. The fifteenth general session of the council was held in the principal church of the city, a cardinal presided, and the emperor in full state was present. The occasion had drawn an immense concourse of spectators. Huss arrived while mass was celebrating, and was kept without, that the holy service might not be profaned by the presence of a heretic. Having been introduced, he was led to a high stool, that all might see him. Here he prayed for some time, while the preacher of the council was discoursing from the text, — "That

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the body of sin might be destroyed." The reading of articles against him then began, to which he was forbidden to reply till the whole list was finished. They could not, however, entirely silence him. Being charged with giving himself out as the fourth person in the Trinity, he repeated aloud the Athanasian creed. Being accused of having appealed to Jesus Christ, he repeated the appeal. Having occasion to speak of "the public protection and faith of the emperor," he looked Sigismund full in the face, and the false man blushed deeply.* At length sentence was pronounced, first against his books, and then against himself. His books were to be burned, and himself to be degraded. Huss fell on his knees, praying, — "Lord Jesus, pardon my enemies! Thou knowest that they have falsely accused me. Pardon them of thine infinite mercy!" The ceremony of degradation immediately followed. He was first dressed in full canonicals, and a sacramental cup placed in his hand. They then exhorted him to retract. Again he refused. The cup was taken from his hand, and the vestments drawn off one by one, with a curse for each. They then clipped his hair, to efface the tonsure, and placed on his head a paper cup of a cubit's height, painted over with shapes of devils and bearing the word "arch-heretic," and so devoted his soul, as they said, to the infernal spirits. "And I," he replied, "commit my soul to Thee, who didst wear a crown of thorns." He was now delivered over to the secular power, and led out to execution. He was followed by the princes of the empire, with a band of eight hundred armed men, at whose heels came an immense multitude. The train took the way of the bishop's palace, that Huss might see the burning of his own books. He smiled at the sight. When he reached the stake, he fell on his knees and recited some of the penitential psalms, and often repeated the words, — "Into thy hands, O God, I commend my spirit." As he was about to speak to the people, he was forbidden by the imperial vicar, and ordered to be burned. Then he prayed aloud, — "Lord Jesus, pardon all my enemies!" After speaking a few kind words to his jailers, he was bound to the stake, unbound again,

* The remembrance of that blush lasted for a century, for when Charles V. was urged to violate Luther's safe-conduct, — "No," replied he, "I should not like to blush like Sigismund."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and rebound, that the face of the heretic might be turned from the east. Fagots and heaps of straw were then piled up about him, and the fire was ready to be set. Another offer was made him to recant, which with a loud voice he rejected. The nobles of the empire withdrew, and the pile was lighted. As the wind caught the flames and wrapped them around him, the crowd could no longer see his face, but he was heard thrice to say, — "Jesus, son of the living God, have pity on me!" The fire was kept up till every part of the body was consumed; the ashes were then scraped together and thrown into the Rhine. But the Bohemians hollowed out the ground where he was burned, and sent the precious earth to Prague.

The death of Jerome was delayed till the next spring. Worn out with the sufferings of a long imprisonment, his courage had given way, and he consented to recant. But he withdrew his abjuration, and, after undergoing an examination in which his firmness and eloquence were the admiration even of his enemies, he went to the stake, with a noble magnanimity worthy of the friend of Huss. Hear what Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II., says of the martyrs: — "They went to the stake as to a banquet. Not a word fell from them which showed the least faint-heartedness. In the midst of the flames they sung hymns to the last gasp without ceasing. Never did any philosopher suffer death with so much constancy as they endured the fire."

The council were now at liberty to put the finishing stroke to the extinction of the Schism. Gregory having resigned, Benedict, untamable to the end, was deposed, and in 1417 a new pope was chosen by the title of Martin V. Some attempts towards a reformation of morals in the church were made, but to no great purpose, and this famous assembly dissolved in 1418. It owes its chief renown to the murder of Huss and Jerome; and Sigismund has been saved from oblivion by the violation of a solemn promise. Thus the virtues of the good are a perpetual judgment on the sins of the wicked. The city of Constance yet shows the cell in which Huss was confined, and the spot on which he stood to receive his sentence, — the most interesting memorials of the great council.

The council during its session passed severe decrees against the communion in both kinds, which had been revived

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

afresh in Bohemia, and against the Hussites in general. But the two martyrs became saints in the eyes of their countrymen. The day of Huss's death was celebrated among them, and the seat which he used to occupy, before his pulpit, was hacked into splinters, to be carried away as a memorial of him. The terrible one-eyed Ziska arose, and a war of horrible violence and barbarity broke out, which hunted Sigismund almost to his grave.

The Roman church rallied after the council of Constance. Under favor of a powerful reaction, it sustained itself a century longer. Then came Luther, in the fulness of time, and accomplished what Wycliffe and Huss had in vain attempted before the hour was ripe. The battle was opened on the same ground, the immorality of the clergy and the sale of indulgences; but it did not end there.

ART. II. — P. VIRGILIUS MARO, *qualem omni parte illustratum tertio publicavit* CHR. GOTTL. HEYNE, *cui* SERVIUM *pariter integrum et variorum Notas cum suis subjunxit* N. E. LEMAIRE. Paris: P. Didot, Sen. 1819. 8vo. 8 vols. in 9.

LET not our readers suppose that we have undertaken "to gild refined gold," or to say a word in praise of Heyne's Virgil. We might, however, recommend the edition of it named above as containing a more ample collection of critical and biographical materials than any other that we have seen. Its value, to the readers of the Georgics especially, is greatly enhanced by a very complete "Flora Virgiliana" in French, in which the plants named by Virgil are identified, so far as is practicable, with plants known at the present time, and referred to their appropriate places, both in the Linnæan classification and under the natural orders. This is a department of inquiry which demands the services of a scientific botanist, and in which a mere lexicographer or critic might pursue his labors to little purpose. Many of the classical names of plants owe their origin to fabulous, remote, or ideal associations, and are employed by ancient writers to denote species or genera widely diverse from those which in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

modern systems bear the same names. In some instances, the same Latin word denotes two or more very different plants; in others, different tribes, now regarded as belonging to the same family, are marked by distinct generic names. Often the notices that can be collected from all antiquity with reference to a plant, perhaps too universally known to have been described in detail, are so vague, fragmentary, and incidental, as to render its identification a process like that by which Cuvier was wont to reconstruct the skeleton of an unknown animal from a single tooth.

As we have touched upon this topic, it may not be without interest to our readers for us to illustrate these remarks by two or three prominent instances of ambiguity, which the mere philologist, who was not also a botanist, would be inadequate to solve. The word *lilium* furnishes a case in point. Almost every translator spontaneously renders this *lily*, in whatever connection it is found; yet there can be no doubt that it is often employed to denote also some of the larger species of the *Ornithogalum*, or *Star of Bethlehem*. *Vaccinium* is another term which has divided critics. It is now used to denote the extensive family of shrubs of which our common varieties of *whortleberry* are well-known members. The word was undoubtedly applied to this class of plants on account of its imagined derivation from *vacca*, the whortleberry being the common growth of pastures. But in Virgil's second Eclogue, *vaccinia nigra* are placed in contrast with *alba ligustra*, which must needs denote the *flower* of the *privet*; for its berries are black. The usual symmetry of Virgil's comparisons, therefore, compels us to suppose that his *vaccinium* is a flower, not a fruit, and points to the Greek ὑάκινθος as furnishing its etymology. Nor let it be objected to this interpretation, that the hyacinth is not black. There are varieties of it as black as any of the violet, and in the tenth Eclogue we have the verse,

"Et nigræ *violæ* sunt, et *vaccinia* nigra,"

which furnishes still further ground for regarding the *vaccinium* as a flower.

Of all the ancient names of plants, the lotus probably furnishes the broadest scope for botanical disquisition. It is a name given to no less than eleven trees, shrubs, and annuals, terrestrial and aquatic, of five different genera, belonging to as many different classes of the Linnæan system.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The French lexicographer, Noël, furnishes an amusing instance of carelessness in the floral department of his labors. The *rosemary* was designated in the Augustan age, as it is now, by the term *ros marinus*, from which it derives its English name. Virgil in his Culex uses the name in full, —

"Liliaque, et *roris* non avia cura *marini*."

In the second Georgic, he designates the same herb by *ros* simply: —

"Vix humiles apibus casias *roremque* ministrat."

Ovid also, in his Fasti, has the following verse: —

"Pars thyma, pars *rorem*, pars meliloton, amant."

With these verses before him, Noel not only omits *rosemary* [*romarin*] among the significations of *ros*, but when he comes to *ros marinus* he renders it *eau de mer*, thus sowing sea-water among the laurels and lilies that decked the mosquito's funeral mound.

But it is not our present design to pursue this subject. Our chief purpose in this article is to attempt the solution of the problems presented by Virgil's fourth Eclogue. This is in every point of view a unique poem. The other Eclogues are little more than free translations from Theocritus, or the adaptation of materials derived from him to more recent personages or events. They indicate that stage of culture at which one wisely borrows, and learns, by the re-arrangement of pre-existing materials, how in maturer years to shape and polish his own creations. They relate chiefly to the slender joys and sorrows of rustic life, and whatever in their subject-matter would demand a more elevated and ambitious treatment is gracefully indeed, but inexorably, brought down to the pastoral level. In the fourth, Virgil announces the purpose of a loftier song, — "*paullo majora canamus*." He forsakes the *Sicilian* Muses, as soon as he has invoked them, and sustains himself throughout in a strain immeasurably transcending the bucolic standard in dignity and grandeur. Very little of the imagery, and no portion of the general scheme, of the poem can be traced to his favorite Greek models. It is marked by the utmost purity of language and sentiment, and contains not so much as a cursory reference to the earthly passion of love, the great staple of pastoral poetry; while the rest of the Bucolics not only dwell continually upon that passion, but are mostly conversant with those of its unchaste and unnatural

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

developments which Christian civilization has delivered over to darkness and infamy. In fine, the fourth Eclogue is as much out of place among the other nine, as one of Moore's Sacred Melodies would be in a collection of his most licentious amatory or Bacchanalian songs. On the other hand, we trace in this remarkable poem much more than a general resemblance to the Hebrew prophets. The tone of coloring given to its approaching golden age irresistibly recalls similar descriptions in David, Isaiah, and Micah; and with a slight change of proper names, and a few deviations from the literal rendering, we could easily translate it so that it would seem a paraphrase from the Old Testament. Indeed, those portions of Pope's Messiah drawn directly from it can be distinguished only by the most careful analysis from the parts for which he was indebted to the "Nymphs of Solyma."

This Eclogue has also, so far as we are apprised, the solitary distinction among the remains of classical poetry of being exclusively prophetical in its character. The ancient poets drew their inspiration mainly from the past. Their golden age lay in the infancy of time, and before the birth of Jupiter. Their better days were always in the remotest antiquity. The entire absence of hopefulness as to the fortunes of the race is a pervading characteristic of them all. "*Omnia fatis in pejus ruere*," is their universal creed, — hardly ever disowned, except when, in a fit of sycophancy, or to save his head, the poet assigns to the reigning tyrant some decisive influence on coming ages. The etymology of the Greek and Latin words synonymous with *poet* has no reference to the future, — ποιητής and *poeta* meaning simply *maker*, and *vates*, i. e. φάτης, signifying merely *speaker* at the outset, though in process of time it came to designate the *prophet* as well as the poet.

Far otherwise was the case with the Hebrews. Their language has no word corresponding to our word *poet*; but נָבִיא, *prophet*, a word derived from a root denoting the bringing forth of what is still hidden, was applied to every author, whether in prose or poetry, who transcended the scope of the mere annalist. This same designation was also employed to denote their religious teachers and their minstrels, in which latter sense only was it that Saul was "among the prophets." Now language is history; and a well-ascertained philological fact may always be taken as a stenographic

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abstract of an entire series or class of historical facts. The Hebrew poets, teachers, and minstrels were not called prophets fortuitously; for words are never coined or applied by haphazard. They were thus designated, because prophecy formed the chief staple of their teachings and their songs. The lessons of practical wisdom, which elsewhere were traditionary and grounded on experience, in Judea alone consisted of rules and motives drawn from the untried future. The national bards, who in other countries celebrated the founders and fathers of their respective states, and the half-fabulous legends of early times, in Palestine sang of the Prince of Peace who was yet to come, and of the reign of holiness and love to be established on the renovated earth. The Hebrews had, indeed, a golden age in the past; but in their traditions it was brief and barren of incident, and we find it hardly referred to in all their literature, except in the cursory narrative of Moses. The contemplation of it seems to have kindled no enthusiasm, nor can we remember a single strain in either psalmist or prophet to which it gave the inspiration.

The onward direction of Jewish poetry, art, and ethics is easily accounted for, if we admit the Scriptural narrative of a vein of authentic prophecy underlying the Mosaic dispensation. In all the higher efforts of genius, the mind must needs repose on objects of thought that can be regarded with pleasure, and must draw its inspiration from bright and sparkling fountains. Prospective rather than retrospective, if the future offers any thing hopeful, it will prophesy with pen and tongue, pencil and harp. But if the future be dark, it will retrace the long ages of violence, wrong, and misery, to find the material for its creations in the innocence and quietness of the world's unsoiled infancy. The nations diverged from the common cradle of the yet undivided race, no doubt, with common traditions. All but the Hebrews departed from the monotheism which is proved to have been the primitive religion of mankind by the fact, that every nation has in its mythology accounts of the birth of all its gods save one. These nations, early lapsing into idolatry, rapidly sinking, as to their character and their fortunes, from bad to worse, always able to trace a past better and happier than the present, and cut off from the light of divine revelation, naturally lost their hopefulness, and saw nothing before them but deeper degeneracy and degradation. Those, therefore, who looked beyond the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

present were constrained to look back, — to disinter, prolong, magnify, and adorn the simple traditions of the parent pair in Eden. The Jews, on the other hand, endowed with the divine promise of an unending era of universal virtue and happiness, turned away from a Paradise Lost to a Paradise Regained, and lavished all the resources of fancy, eloquence, and song on the golden future, which their faith made present.

In this important regard, the fourth Eclogue detaches itself from the classical, and bears close kindred to the Hebrew school of poetry. It breathes throughout the hope of a new, happier, and more glorious era, to be established through the agency of a child whose birth was then near at hand, — the very same hope which at that age pervaded the Jews, wherever scattered, sustained in them an indomitable elasticity of soul, and kept them in an attitude of seemingly hopeless and always unsuccessful rebellion against the Roman power. Hence it is by no means surprising that the early Christians generally, and not a few in later times, should have supposed Virgil divinely inspired to predict the speedy advent of Jesus Christ, — a theory which, did it yet need refutation, would vanish before the chronological fact, that this Eclogue, which was written between thirty and forty years prior to the advent of our Saviour, promised the birth of the wonderful child within a few days at the farthest. Nor yet is it conceivable that Virgil could have had any serious purpose of sanctioning or publishing any Jewish belief or expectation as such. The Jews and every thing appertaining to them were despised in patrician circles at Rome ; and our poet was too much of a courtier to have adopted notions from a source so distasteful to his patrons. Besides, sympathy with the Jewish anticipations of the Messiah could hardly have existed, except in company with many other ideas from the same source, of which we find not the slightest trace. The only tenable hypothesis is, that this Bucolic was written in prospect of the birth of a child in the family of one of Virgil's illustrious patrons, and was designed simply as the adulatory offering of such tribute as the Muses have always been constrained to render to place and power. It concerns us, then, to know, first, in honor of whose expected child the Eclogue was written, — secondly, what inducement Virgil had to represent that child as the father of a new age, — and, finally, whence he derived the Hebrew tone of his imagery.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Many critics have inferred from the inscription of this poem to Pollio, that the expectations which it makes illustrious existed in his family. Pollio, indeed, had two sons ; but it cannot be proved that either of them was born during his consulship. Nor was his position in the republic sufficiently prominent and elevated to serve as a basis for such lofty predictions. Other stars were too manifestly in the ascendant for one dependent on the favor of the greatest to exhaust the capacity of language in the adulation of a mere satellite. Moreover, the *Te consule* and *Te duce* (vv. 11 and 13), and the absence of any reference to a nearer relation, show conclusively that Pollio could not have been the father of the promised hero.

Yet another hypothesis has pointed to Marcus Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus, whose early virtues and premature death are celebrated in the sixth book of the Æneid, as the subject of these sublime predictions. During the year when this poem was written, a peace, or rather a truce, was concluded between Octavius and Antony, chiefly through Pollio's mediation. As a pledge of this ill-compacted union, Antony received in marriage Octavia, the sister of his colleague, who shortly after gave birth to M. Marcellus, the fruit of her former marriage. Could Virgil have foreseen the brilliant fortunes prepared for this yet unborn boy, and the place which he was to occupy in the affections of his ambitious uncle, he would undoubtedly have laid his votive verses in the cradle, before it received its nursling. But he had, the previous year, been commended to the favor of Augustus, had received back at his hand his Mantuan estates, which had been seized by the greedy veterans, and had owned the benefit by an apotheosis of his benefactor in the first Bucolic. He could not have been unaware of the hardly masked jealousy and enmity which threatened speedy dissolution to the nominal friendship of Antony and Octavius. He had never been in any way connected with Antony, nor, as the friend of Octavius, could he have anticipated any benefit from making court to his rival. As a shrewd observer of character, he must have readily discerned which of the two would work his way to supreme power. A poem, inscribed to Pollio, who had been, up to that very year, of Antony's faction, and promising the sceptre of universal dominion to a son about to be born under Antony's roof and guardianship, would have been received by Octavius as a flagrant insult. The verse,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Pacatumque reget *patriis virtutibus* orbem,"

has, indeed, been often quoted as better applicable to a descendant of the Marcelli than to a member of any other Roman family. But was there ever a Roman poet in whose verse *patriæ virtutes* of every imaginable kind would not have been ascribed or promised to the child of a man who had the whole empire under his feet?

The intrinsic improbability of the dedication of this Eclogue to an expected child, either in Pollio's or in Antony's family, is enhanced by the fact, that similar hopes then existed in the household of Octavius. In the course of that year, his wife Scribonia gave birth, not indeed to a son, but to the infamous Julia. There can be no doubt that Octavius had, from the time of his adoption by Julius Cæsar, cherished the hope of a more ample and permanent sway over the Roman empire than had been reposed in any single magistrate in the ages of watchful, jealous liberty. Monocratic visions for him had a substantial basis, both in his own position and endowments, and in the general weariness of republican forms, which had for many years only furnished plausible names and pretexts for a hydra-headed despotism. Views of this character must have tacitly blended in his mind with the hopes cherished for his offspring. As he was already more than his uncle's heir, he not unnaturally looked that his child should be more than his; nor could a poet have devised any more delicate or successful tribute of gratitude or flattery than such a laurel wreath as this of Virgil's for the brow of the unborn infant. The disappointment sustained by the birth of a girl, in lieu of the promised boy, accounts for the silence of contemporary antiquity as to the object of Virgil's predictions. The Eclogue must have been regarded at the time and in the poet's own circle as a misadventure, and would no doubt have been suppressed, were it ever possible to suppress the fruit of true genius. But when Virgil found that it could not die, he undoubtedly detached from it whatever there might have been in the caption or form of dedication to indicate its original purpose.

We next inquire into the origin of the extraordinary prediction embodied in this poem; for it must be acknowledged that this is no common flattery, nor has it any parallel among offerings of homage on similar occasions, in ancient or modern times. It promises the child, not the most potent of earthly sceptres, but a regenerating power over the hearts of men, the instincts of savage beasts, and the course of nature.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It seems adapted even to detract from the forms of greatness then held in the highest esteem. The forthcoming hero is to owe none of his renown to arms or war ; but as he emerges from boyhood, the last vestiges of ancient guile and force are to disappear. Had there not been some popular notion or expectation ready to be wrought into this highly ornate form, the conception would have been at once too bold and too pure for the receptivity of the age. We cannot but ascribe it to a Hebrew original. The Jews at that period lived almost solely in the future. Their ritual, their religious constitution, their social organization, their domestic habits, were full of the spirit of prophecy. Their genealogies were preserved with the most sacred care, and the humblest maid or matron from any branch of the root of David lived in the proud hope that she might give her nation its redeemer, and the world its king. The sincerity of this universal expectation in the hearts of the people was attested by its power to elevate them above their outward fortunes, and to fill the darkest present with insurmountable confidence in the future. Now the Jews were dispersed throughout the civilized world, and wherever they dwelt, even with considerable sectarian differences, they were united by their common property in the hopes which then seemed so near fulfilment. Their sanguine temper, their boastfulness of the good times at hand, must have awakened in the souls of many around them sympathy no less than idle curiosity. Their undoubting trust must have been contagious, especially at a transition period of the world's history, when the old foundations of society were crumbling away, and when the elements of political and national existence were in a state of solution, ready to crystallize in forms none could tell how unprecedented and marvellous.

That the Jews as a nation had not uttered the great prediction without effect, we have abundant testimony of the most authentic character. From Judea as a centre there seems to have been everywhere diffused the expectation that some divine personage was soon to appear, and a new and nobler age to dawn upon man. This impression, no doubt, had an important agency in depressing the popular idolatry, dispiriting its ministers, bringing its auguries into disrepute and silencing many of its oracles. It was this which sent the Magi to Bethlehem to do homage to the infant Jesus.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Suetonius writes, with reference to these very times:— "There had been spread abroad [*percrebuerat*] through the whole East an ancient and fixed opinion, that Judæa would send forth those who should obtain supreme authority." Tacitus also says, with reference to the same period:— "There was a general persuasion, that it is contained in the ancient books of the priests, that at that very time the East should gain the ascendency, and Judæa should furnish rulers for the world." The "ancient books of the priests" referred to (*antiquis sacerdotum libris*) were undoubtedly the Sibylline books, and there are some other indications that they contained references to the prevalent Jewish expectation. They undoubtedly were, during the entire period of their existence, constantly enriched by their keepers with whatever oracles might suit the temper of the times. They were expressly so worded, as in any event to seem infallible,— "*ut, quodcumque accidisset, prædictum videretur.*" Bearing this designed ambiguity in mind, we may not perhaps greatly err in supposing that it was with reference to some oracular *dictum* based on Jewish prophecy that Cicero says:— "*Sibyllæ versus observamus, quos illa furens fudisse dicitur: quorum interpres nuper falsa quadam hominum fama dicturus in senatu putabatur, eum, quem revera regem habebamus, appellandum quoque esse Regem, si salvi esse vellemus.*" That an oracle of such purport existed, Cicero evidently did not believe, nor is it conceivable, that, with the Roman hatred for the very name of king, which endured long after the people had become familiar with the substance of royalty, a saying of this character should have remained unexpunged in sacred books under the public custody. But it is in the highest degree probable that some reference to the expected king from the East should have crept into these oracular leaves, as their volume was enlarged by successive hands, and that that same misreported or misunderstood excerpt from them should have given rise to the "*falsa fama*" mentioned by Cicero.

But, independently of any inference that might be drawn from this source, we have abundant reason to suppose that the expectation current among the Jews was not only well known, but regarded with a great degree of concern throughout the civilized world. What more courtly poetical artifice could Virgil have invented, than to wrest the promised dia-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dem from the despised house of David, and to crown with it the heir of the Cæsars ? Here was this most august of predictions, from a source deemed utterly ignoble, floating about with reference to a people with whom the Roman mind had only scornful and contemptuous associations. The poet detaches the splendid prophecy from its mean and despicable environments of place and nation, and republishes it with reference to a family which was even then clutching the imperial purple, and for which fancy could hardly devise a destiny beyond its ambition.

But not only does the general conception of this Eclogue claim our critical regard. The whole coloring of the poem is unique as compared with classic models, and it was written at a period of the poet's life when he had attempted no independent flight, and was little more than a paraphrast. It has been generally supposed that he derived his materials for the fourth Bucolic from the Sibylline books. But, in the first place, these books were accessible only to the Quindecemviri, who had the charge of them. It is certain that Cicero, who had a great deal of curiosity with regard to them, had not been able either to consult them, or to get any authentic account of their contents. Then, again, we have no means of knowing that these books contained any detailed predictions like those which formed the basis of this poem. Our knowledge of what was in them is scanty and beggarly in the extreme. Indeed, the collection itself must have been at that time in a confused and scattered state, the original leaves having been burned half a century before, and replaced or rewritten from real or pretended fragments, and the reminiscences of their official guardians. The collection now extant under the name of the Sibylline books contains, indeed, many of the materials employed by Virgil ; but this is a forgery of the second century, and contains historical references that fix A. D. 138 as the earliest possible date for its composition. It was compiled in great part from the Old and New Testaments, and was probably a work of fancy, in which the author, evidently a recent convert to Christianity, intended to write what the Sibyl ought to have said, but became unwittingly an impostor upon an over-credulous age, which promptly received his farrago of history, fable, and nonsense as predictions wrung from the demons of the classic mythology in attestation of the Christian faith.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We do not believe that Virgil has reference to the Sibylline books in his "*ultima Cumæi carminis ætas.*" Though but little is expressly borrowed or imitated from Hesiod, there are several indications that Virgil had the Works and Days before him when he wrote the fourth Eclogue. Now Hesiod was perhaps a native of Cuma, a city or village in one of the Æolian isles. His father was born there, and driven by stress of fortune to Ascra, in Bœotia. Cumæan is therefore, according to the analogy of such epithets, interchangeable with Ascræan, as designating the poet or his works. Virgil, indeed, commonly uses the latter epithet when speaking of Hesiod; but in this case *Ascræi* would have spoiled the verse, by necessitating the elision of the final letter of the preceding dactyle. *Ultimus* literally means *most remote*, without defining past or future time, and is often used by Virgil and the best writers of the Augustan age to denote *earliest.* We would, then, render,

"Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas,"

"The earliest age of Hesiod's song now comes."

This rendering is favored by the two following verses: —

"Magnus *ab integro* sæclorum nascitur ordo.
Jam *redit* et Virgo; *redeunt* Saturnia regna."

Ab integro is usually applied to the renewal of transactions or series of events that have taken place before, and here denotes, as we suppose, the renewal of the great series of ages which Hesiod had sung. The first of his ages was the golden, under the reign of Saturn, giving a point to Virgil's *redeunt*; while the last incident of his iron age was the indignant flight from earth of the *Virgin Justice*, whose late departure would have suggested the idea of her return as the first token of a better era.

The conception of these three verses, and here and there a trait of imagery, we suppose Virgil to have derived from Hesiod. But we are inclined to believe that Virgil, when he wrote this Eclogue, had the Old Testament at his side, and deliberately worked up such materials as he found in the Psalms and the Prophets. Nothing is more probable than this conjecture. Virgil was not only a man of extensive, but of very curious erudition. It must have been by traditions handed down from his own times that he was currently

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

called, all through the Middle Ages, the "great magician," in which capacity it was, undoubtedly, that Dante adopted him for a *cicerone* in the infernal regions. Now a reputation of this kind in former times always adhered to a man who turned into the by-paths of knowledge, sought out the literature or traditions of nations but little known, or became conversant with the rites or records of any other than his national religion. There is much in the meagre accounts of Virgil's life, and much in his works, to indicate a very various culture, and a great deal of knowledge of a rare and unusual kind. He seems to have entered into the mysteries of the veterinary art with a scholarly curiosity and scientific zeal which can have had no parallel among poets. The Georgics contain many observations of natural phenomena, which could not have been collected without loving diligence on his part, and which hardly need emendation now. His frequent deviations from the usual details of popular fables evince similar habits of research as to the various readings of national and mythological traditions. The sacred books of the Jews were, indeed, hardly known by the Romans. But they were easily accessible in the Septuagint, and there could not have been less than twenty or thirty thousand Jews in Rome at that very time. Their writings were neglected, because they themselves were despised. But Virgil would have been the very man to seek the more for their literary and religious memorials, on account of their depressed condition.

There is yet another ground on which it seems in the highest degree probable that Virgil was acquainted with the Old Testament prophecies. The very Herod, who was so intensely fearful of the coming of the Messiah, was Pollio's intimate friend. Members of the Herod family, when in Rome, always lodged at Pollio's house. Could they have been silent there respecting the predictions which then made all Jewish hearts but their own leap with hope, and which they regarded with an agony of terror? Their fears would naturally have become a common topic of conversation in Pollio's household, where Virgil was a constant visitor, and would not unnaturally have incited him, had he lacked an inducement, to seek acquaintance with the Jewish Scriptures. Nor could he have failed to see at a glance how exalted a tribute, beyond the praise of all former song, they might furnish him for the anticipated heir of Octavius.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We have not been led to our conclusions with regard to this magnificent poem by any religious or Scriptural bias. We do not regard it as reflecting peculiar honor on Virgil, that he should have become in any degree conversant with the Jewish Scriptures, without imbibing from them a higher theology and a purer ethical system than we can trace in his writings. Nor do we reckon it among the distinguishing glories of those stern old Hebrew prophets, that they should have furnished a birth-song for throes that at best would have given the world an accomplished tyrant, but in fact brought to light the vilest wretch that ever bore the form or name of woman. We have barely attempted to make our theory conform to the facts in the case. Had Isaiah been a Greek, or had Pindar written the seventy-second Psalm, no critic would have doubted that Virgil imitated them in the fourth Eclogue. But Isaiah and the Psalms must have been within his knowledge and his easy reach. Why, then, need we hesitate to believe that he for once forsook Helicon for

> "Siloa's brook, that flowed
> Fast by the oracle of God"?

ART. III. — *Notes on the Early Settlement of the Northwestern Territory.* By JACOB BURNET. Cincinnati: Derby, Bradley, & Co. 1847. 8vo. pp. 501.

WE know of nothing which illustrates more forcibly the rapid growth of the vast region northwest of the Ohio river, than the fact that the author of the volume before us, a man still active and vigorous, a bank director and politician, was a leader among the first true lawmakers, the earliest legislators, of that immense realm. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, — with all their swarming millions, their gigantic granaries and clustering workshops, their canals and railroads, schoolhouses and churches, their libraries of statutes and reports, their piles of legislative documents, their monstrous debts, and yet more monstrous possessions, — have risen into existence under the eye of one who is still as much a citizen of the busy world as he was when his pen traced the first laws and sketched the dawning policy of that "mother of empires," the Northwestern Territory.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was in 1796 that Jacob Burnet, then twenty-six years of age, left his home in New Jersey, and passed into the Western wilderness, the inhabitants of which, north of the Ohio, were estimated, at that time, at about fifteen thousand souls. The young lawyer was bound for Cincinnati, a little aguish village of log cabins, where a brick had never been seen. On the eastern edge of this village stood Fort Washington, commanded at that time by a young lieutenant, named William Henry Harrison, who had served as aide-de-camp to Wayne, in 1794. The army and the bar — and within those two folds were contained most of the educated and refined men then in the Northwest — were chiefly remarkable for the exaggerated tone of dissipation which prevailed in them. Of nine lawyers who were at the bar when Mr. Burnet came to the Territory, eight died confirmed sots, and a large proportion of the officers under St. Clair, Wayne, and Wilkinson were hard drinkers.* The greatest man of the early West, George Rogers Clark, died a drunkard.† In this respect, a great change has been taking place within the last twenty years; the earlier pioneers not of the army or bar were by no means so abandoned in their habits as their more refined fellow-laborers; but among their children, born in comparative ease and wealth, and accustomed from childhood to the loose ways of the higher classes, there was a fearful amount of dissipation, and many, whose talents fitted them to rank with the foremost, sank into early graves or hopeless obscurity in consequence of their folly; but with a third generation have come greater inducements to labor, better examples, and a higher tone; so that throughout the West there is far less to regret and censure than there was even twelve or fifteen years since.

When Mr. Burnet entered the Territory, it was divided into four counties, to which a fifth was soon added; the county seats being Marietta, Cincinnati, Kaskaskia, Vincennes, and Detroit. At these points the courts were held at which the members of the bar were in the habit of practising; but those from Cincinnati seldom went to Kaskaskia or Vincennes, though the writer of the work before us states, that, from the time he entered the practice until the State of Ohio was

* Burnet, pp. 36, 37. Harrison was one of the few exceptions.
† *Ibid.* p. 81.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

organized, he did not miss attending a single term at Detroit or Marietta. The journeys from one point to another were made on horseback, occupying from six to twelve days, the path lying for the most part through an uninhabited wilderness. The exposure and the risks were, of necessity, very great; but it was that very exposure, as we are informed, which made of our author, whose health was delicate, a robust man, who now, at seventy-seven, seeks amusement in a journey from the banks of the Ohio to the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

In 1798, the change of government took place which elevated the young attorney to the rank of a lawmaker. This change grew out of the Ordinance of 1787, which provided that whenever the Northwestern Territory contained "five thousand *free* male inhabitants, of full age" (not, as Judge Burnet states, "five thousand *white* male inhabitants"), it should be entitled to choose representatives, and have a government of its own. In this government, besides the House chosen directly by the people, there was a Legislative Council, consisting of five persons, who were to be selected by the President of the United States from a list of ten sent him by the representatives of the Territory.

At the head of the Council first chosen stands the name of Jacob Burnet. Of his labors in the sphere to which he was called it will be enough to say, that during the first session he prepared and reported sixteen bills or laws (the whole number passed being thirty-seven), a system of rules for the Council, an answer to the governor's address, a memorial to Congress, and an address to the President of the United States.

In connection with the last, the address to Mr. Adams, a question arises which is worthy of our attention. In the paper referred to, Mr. Burnet "alluded very specially to the firmness with which he [Mr. Adams] resisted the efforts of the British commissioners, during the negotiations at Paris, to make the river Ohio the northern boundary of the United States";* and in a note to the work before us, the writer affirms, that, Dr. Franklin having suggested a compliance with the proposition to make the Ohio the north line, Mr. Adams replied, "No," and said that he would sooner "withdraw from the negotiation, return home, and exhort his country-

* Burnet, p. 315.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men to continue the war as long as they could keep a soldier in the field. Mr. Jay was equally determined."* The claim thus advanced by Judge Burnet was also made by him in his address to John Quincy Adams at the founding of the Cincinnati Observatory, in November, 1843; and the fact, that the son of the statesman for whom the claim is made received it in silence, has been, though surely without reason, regarded as an indorsement by him of the correctness of Judge Burnet's statement. But is it correct? Does it do justice to Mr. Jay? We ask our readers to weigh the following facts.

Mr. Jay reached Paris, whither he was called by letters from Dr. Franklin, on the 23d of June, 1782.† From that time until September, little or no progress was made in negotiation, in consequence of the dilatory steps of the English government, which at first issued a commission wherein the United States were termed colonies,‡ a term to which Mr. Jay resolutely objected, although Dr. Franklin and the Count de Vergennes thought it "signified little." Mr. Jay's opposition, and his arguments to Mr. Oswald, the British commissioner, carried the day, however, and on the 27th of September a new commission, drawn in accordance with Mr. Jay's views, reached Paris.§ Meantime, it had become evident that Spain, and probably France also, would oppose the claims of the United States to the West.‖ Mr. Jay was convinced that they would uphold the English claim to all the country north of the Ohio. Against the views thus entertained by her allies, the commissioner of the United States (Mr. Jay ¶) took a stand as decided as could be taken; and fearing that the court of England might be influenced by the Spanish and supposed French views, he sent a special messenger to converse with Lord Shelburne on the subject of boundaries, and to urge the full American claim.** With Mr. Oswald at Paris little or no difficulty appears to have occurred; and articles were drawn up by the 8th of October, which Mr. Oswald recommended to his court for adoption.†† By these articles, the northern

* Burnet, p. 315, *note.*
† Sparks's *Dip. Corr.* VIII. 113.
‡ *Ibid.* X. 76.
§ *Ibid.* VIII. 136, 143, 204.
‖ *Ibid.* VIII. 150 – 160, 202 – 205.
¶ Dr. Franklin was sick, and did little. (*Dip. Corr.* VI. 451.)
** *Ibid.* VIII. 164 – 169.
†† *Ibid.* VIII. 204.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

boundary of the United States was to have been, as at present, from Maine to the point where the 45th parallel crosses the St. Lawrence, "thence straight to the south end of the lake Nepissing, and thence straight to the source of the river Mississippi."* These lines, it will be seen, would have given us not only the chief part of the Northwestern Territory, but also the greater portion of Upper Canada, and the complete control of the Lakes. This boundary the British ministry, however, would not consent to, and Mr. Oswald was so informed on the 23d of October; three days after, for the first time since the negotiations began, Mr. Adams reached Paris.†

In Mr. Adams Mr. Jay found a bold and able coadjutor, and in the discussions which followed the two were together, as far as we can discover, upon all leading points.‡ In respect to boundaries, however, there is nothing to show that the British wished at that time to force the United States south to the Ohio. Two lines were talked of, the one being the 45th parallel from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, the other the present line through the Lakes.§ Mr. Oswald agreed to the former, which would still have given the United States the control of the Lakes, and a second set of articles, embodying that boundary, was prepared November 5th;‖ but these also the British ministry objected to, and twenty days after *offered* a third set,¶ defining the boundary as it now exists.

We should not have dwelt upon this point so long, did we not deem it a duty to place in a just light every act of a man so true, pure, and patriotic, and yet so little estimated and basely maligned, as John Jay. That Judge Burnet may remember correctly the understanding of the time, and the tone of the papers of the day, we do not question; Mr. Adams was preëminent for his services and his abilities; but the evidence to which we have referred is the best to be had, and shows, we think, distinctly, that the main battle as to boundaries was fought by his colleague.

Among the most interesting portions of Judge Burnet's volume are the sketches of the men who were distinguished in the early annals of the Northwest. Among these, no one, both from rank and misfortune, is so prominent as Governor St.

---

* *Dip. Corr.* X. 90.
‡ *Ibid.* VI. 436, 439, 448, &c.
‖ *Ibid.* X. 94.
† *Ibid.* VIII. 205, 206; VI. 436.
§ *Ibid.* VI. 442, 465.
¶ *Ibid.* X. 101.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Clair. St. Clair was a man born never to succeed, and upon whom the consequences of ill-success were visited as crimes. He was born in Scotland, in 1734, of a wealthy and influential family. Having received a university education, he joined the army, and was with Wolfe in 1759 at the battle of Quebec. After the peace of Paris he left the army, and bought a farm in the interior of Pennsylvania, in which Province he held various commissions. Among the duties which came upon him as a representative of the Penn family was that of arresting, in 1774, Dr. John Connolly, who, under a commission from Lord Dunmore of Virginia, had arrived upon the Monongahela with a view to seizing Pittsburg and the neighbouring lands, all of which were claimed by the Old Dominion; and it is from St. Clair's letters that we learn the connection between that seizure, which was ultimately effected, and the Indian war which followed; the fact having been, that Connolly, to reconcile the Virginia Burgesses to his extravagance in fortifying and providing against the Pennsylvanians, thought a little Indian skirmishing advisable, so that warlike expenditures might be charged to that account, and thence came the murder of Logan's family and its consequences.*

When the Revolution broke out, St. Clair was made a colonel in the American army; in 1776 he was created brigadier, and in 1777 major-general, and was placed in command of Ticonderoga. That important post, however, he was forced to yield in July of the same year, and did it, although he anticipated that it would bring upon him, as was the fact, a storm of popular censure, and perhaps his own ruin. "I know," he said to Wilkinson at the time, "I could save my character by sacrificing the army; but were I to do so, I should forfeit that which the world could not restore, and which it cannot take away, the approbation of my own conscience."† The self-sacrifice was made; and although his companions in arms, the court-martial which examined the affair, and Congress, all considered his conduct wise, right, and honorable, the poison of calumny had entered the public mind, and was never eradicated.

---

* See the original papers in *American Archives*, I. 252–288, 435, 459, 470, 484, 506, 774, &c.

† Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, I. 85.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the close of the war he again retired to his farm, whence he was called to serve in Congress, over which body he presided for some time. When the Northwestern Territory was about to be organized, in 1787, St. Clair was desirous of being appointed its governor; and such was his influence in Congress, that Dr. Cutler, the agent of the New England associates, found it wise to withdraw the Massachusetts candidate, General Parsons, and to support the Pennsylvanian,* who was chosen in October.

As governor of the Northwest, St. Clair was unfortunate, both in his civil and military capacities. His love of official show and fondness of power displeased some, his strong Federal politics disgusted others, and with the Territorial legislature, when first organized, he came into conflict by the exercise of his "veto," having refused his assent to eleven acts. But his famous defeat was a more general ground of complaint than even his political course. Never, indeed, was a man more denounced than he for an affair in which little or no blame attached to him. As the exact circumstances of that second "Braddock's field" have not been generally presented correctly, we will, in justice to the commander's memory, state them.

On the 3d of November, 1791, St. Clair's army reached the banks of a small tributary of the Wabash, at the spot afterwards named by Wayne Fort Recovery. Here the regular troops rested in a position of considerable security, the militia being thrown across the stream a quarter of a mile beyond the main force. Colonel Oldham was in command of the militia, and was instructed to send out scouts in all directions, to ascertain if the Indians who had been hovering about the army for some days were present in force or not. In addition to this, a volunteer body of regulars, picked men, was sent under Captain Slough† to take a position in advance of the militia, and make a yet more careful examination of the woods. This done, the commanding general, who was miserably sick, sat down with Major Ferguson to plan a slight work as a place of deposit for his stores. Slough during the night advanced a mile and a quarter into the forest beyond the stream, and doubtless into the immediate vicinity of the great

* See Cutler's *Journal*, in *N. A. Review*, Vol. LIII. 334, &c. (Oct. 1841).
† In *Am. State Papers*, V. 138, this name is misprinted "Hough."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

council of the natives, who occupied a camp three quarters of a mile in extent, when, finding the Indians very numerous, and being satisfied that the army would be attacked in the morning, he withdrew his troops to give warning to their comrades. On his way back to the main camp, he stopped among the militia, and reported his observations to Colonel Oldham, who, in reply, told him that his spies brought in similar information, and that he also expected an attack by daylight. Oldham's message Captain Slough agreed to carry to head-quarters, reporting it, together with his own discoveries, to General Butler, the second in command, and who had charge of the first line, — from which, if we remember rightly, Slough was detached. General Butler was an old Indian trader and fighter, and was regarded as the best man in the camp for the business on hand ; but at the time he was not on good terms with St. Clair, and neither communicated the information he had received to the commander-in-chief, nor took any precautions himself.

The night passed on, and the troops mustered before daylight in the morning, as was usual ; but not a word reached St. Clair of the enemy which filled the woods around him. But when the soldiers, dismissed from their ranks again, were in confusion and unprepared for action, the yells that rose about the devoted band told too plainly the presence of the foe ; and in a moment, before the troops could be fairly reorganized, the militia, flying like deer before the hunters, rushed into the camp and produced a disorder that could not be remedied. In addition to this, the soldiers, trained to European warfare, were gathered in masses round the cannon, and thus became a target to the hidden riflemen of the woods. St. Clair did all that could be done ; but, disabled by illness, his officers killed, and his troops at length panic-stricken, after three hours and a half of hard fighting, he was forced to turn his back, himself almost the last man on the field. Thus was his army destroyed through the gross negligence of General Butler, and the false though usual policy of placing his militia in advance, and fighting in close rather than open order.

General Butler died on the field of battle, and no explanation of his conduct can be given ; but had he reported to his superior officer the facts made known to him by Slough, the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

army, St. Clair assures us, would have been moved at once upon the enemy, and the result might have been a victory.*

In relation to General Butler's death there are various accounts, which, to the skeptic in the details of history, must be full of comfort. Some say he was killed by a half-breed Shawnee chief, his own son; this is the account given by John Johnston, of Piqua, Ohio, a prominent Indian agent.† Stone, in his Life of Brant,‡ tells us that he was badly wounded, and left upon the field of battle, and that, seeing Simon Girty, he asked that worthy to kill him; this, Girty, being unused to acts of mercy, refused to do; but an Indian, learning the sufferer's rank, kindly buried his tomahawk in his brain. A third statement, given in Butler's Kentucky,§ informs us that he was wounded and taken back of the lines to be attended to; but that while they were dressing his wounds, an Indian broke through the ranks in pursuit of the officer, whom he had seen borne away, and killed him in the arms of his attendants. Other variations might be added, but it is needless, as these are enough to show the worthlessness of minute historical statements, even in relation to what happened in our own country but a half-century ago.

To return to St. Clair. His unpopularity was brought to a climax by his opposition to the efforts of the people who inhabited the eastern portion of the Territory to obtain a State organization. This opposition he continued up to the meeting of the convention to form the State constitution, in November, 1802, and, having obtained permission to address that meeting, he did it in a manner which caused Mr. Jefferson instantly to remove him from office. He then returned to Pennsylvania, worn out, poor, and without hope. A claim which he had against the United States was refused payment because barred by the statute of limitations, and a bill to grant him an annuity was lost in the House of Representatives. Pennsylvania acted more generously, and bestowed upon him a yearly income sufficient for his wants, which he enjoyed until his death, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, August, 1818.

---

* In reference to this battle, see *American State Papers*, V. 137, 198. *Ibid.* XII. 37, 44. Slough's deposition in St. Clair's *Narrative*, pp. 213–219. Marshall's *Kentucky*, I. 380. Dillon's *Indiana*, I. 308. St. Clair's *Narrative*, pp. 31–36, 135. *American Pioneer*, II. 150.

† Cist's *Cincinnati Miscellany*, II. 299.

‡ p. 204. § II. 310.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Judge Burnet dwells at considerable length upon the Indian wars of the Northwest; and they deserve to be dwelt on, especially at this time, as they show how Washington treated a weak neighbour whose demands were unreasonable and whose conduct was unjust, fearing neither the charge of weakness, nor the accusation of a want of proper national pride. The Indian wars of the Northwest, which in their day were vastly more important to the Union than our present contest, grew up in the following manner. When England made the peace of 1783, she left her Indian allies along the frontier entirely unprovided for, at the mercy of the Americans. Congress naturally regarded the victory over England as a victory also over her helpers, and looked upon the lands of the Northwest as forfeited by Britain in consequence of her treaty, and lost by the natives through the right of conquest. The Indians, accordingly, were offered peace, and portions of their own lands were allotted them as residences and hunting-grounds, while what was needed by the States was taken for nothing, or at a merely nominal price. This is the language of the treaty of Fort McIntosh, made in January, 1785, with the Wyandots, Delawares, Chippewas, and Ottawas; and in that concluded at the mouth of the Great Miami, a year later, not only are their lands "allotted" to the Shawanese, but they are made expressly to acknowledge "the United States to be the sole and absolute sovereigns of all the territory ceded to them by a treaty of peace made between them and the king of Great Britain," January 14th, 1784.* With this understanding on the part of the whites, were made the treaties of Fort Stanwix in 1784, of Fort McIntosh in 1785, of the Great Miami in 1786, and of Fort Harmar in 1789.

But the great body of the Indians refused to acknowledge the validity of these treaties. The celebrated Brant had early seen that the red men, when left to themselves, would soon be stripped of all they had, unless they determined upon and persevered in union. It became with him, therefore, a leading object to secure such a union of the Northwestern and Northern tribes as would put it out of the power of any one

* See also Report to Congress of October 15, 1783 (*Old Journals*, IV. 94). Instructions to Indian Commissioners, same date (*Secret Journals*, . 257). Knox's Report of June 15, 1789 (*American State Papers*, V. 13). tatement of Commissioners in 1793 (*American State Papers*, V. 353).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nation to dispose of its lands without the consent of the others. And he succeeded in forming such a confederacy, though at what period precisely we do not learn, either from Mr. Stone or any other source; its first appearance, so far as we know, was through a very able paper addressed to the United States, in November, 1786, by a meeting of the Indian congress, held at the mouth of the Detroit river.* But although this union of the tribes does not appear till 1786, we find the earlier treaties objected to on the part of Brant and others, because they were made, in opposition to the known wishes of the natives, with single tribes. This point, indeed, seems to have arisen at a very early period; as we find that in October, 1783, it was ordered by Congress that the commissioners to make peace with the Indians should treat with them unitedly; but, in the following March, it was directed that they should meet the tribes at various places and different times,† which policy was adhered to. There was, therefore, on the red man's side, a determination to resist all transfers of land unless made by universal consent, while the whites were disposed to obtain what they could from the fears, the wants, or the weakness of separate tribes; and, inasmuch as the Indian confederacy had no recognized national existence, the whites were able to attain their ends despite the protests of the savages. Indeed, those protests do not make any appearance on record, until, as we have said, the autumn of 1786, although it is alleged that they were made as early as the treaty of Fort Stanwix.

We cannot, therefore, accuse our fellow-countrymen of unfair dealing with their copper-colored brethren, but neither can we be surprised that the children of the forest regarded the growing invasion of their homes with impatience and anger. Of old they had hoped to stop the career of European conquest at the Alleghanies, and had failed; then the Ohio became their landmark; but now that, too, was passed, and they were to be driven they knew not whither. Impatient and angry, war-parties harassed the whole Ohio border, on both sides of the river, and Gamelin, a trader who was sent in April, 1790, up the Wabash, found evidences of a spirit of hostility which led to the useless and

* It is in the *American State Papers*, V. 8.
† *Secret Journals*, I. 255, 261.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unfortunate campaign of Harmar, who was to strike a blow upon the Maumee that would terrify the restless savages into good behaviour. He struck his blow, but the red dogs struck back again; he burnt their towns and corn, but they killed and scalped his "regulars," while his foolish and cowardly militia took to their heels.*

This blow, therefore, served only still further to irritate and encourage the natives, who meanwhile were hoping for direct aid from England. Indirect aid they seem to have had, if not from the authorized upper agents of Britain, at least from her traders and under-functionaries; and soon they were swarming again with torch and tomahawk along the devoted frontier. When this state of facts became known to the President, it was determined to adopt a threefold plan of action, calculated, as it was hoped, to meet all difficulties. By this plan there was to be sent to the confederacy on the Lakes a messenger of peace, under the protection of certain friendly Iroquois chiefs, Corn-Planter and others; in case he failed to satisfy the natives that the United States desired to do justice, expeditions were to go from Kentucky, composed of frontier men, who were to repeat Harmar's blows upon the villages of the Wabash, and avoid his defeats, which were ascribed to the presence of the regulars; while, in the third place, a great army was to be gathered, which should march to the Maumee, take, fortify, and hold the point at the Miami village, now Fort Wayne, and by this means completely overawe and control the unruly red men.† The commander-in-chief was St. Clair, the pacific messenger, Colonel Procter, and the leaders of the Kentuckians, Scott and Wilkinson. Procter's mission entirely failed, in part because he was unable to reach the confederacy, and in part because the Indians mistrusted the three-headed negotiation, which was military at two points, and civil at but one.‡ Scott and Wilkinson, in due time, attacked the unhappy villages on the Wabash, destroying some food and killing a

* See accounts of Harmar's campaign in *American State Papers*, XII. 20, &c., and V. 104, &c. Some writers have placed Harmar's actions on the Scioto; this is because there was a "Chillicothe" on the Maumee; there was a third Indian town of the same name on the Little Miami.

† *American State Papers*, V. 171. Sparks's *Washington*, IX. 109.

‡ Stone's *Life of Brant*, II. 300, &c.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

few warriors. Of St. Clair's most fatal conflict we have already said enough.

When the news of that campaign reached the President, he felt that he must act with decision, and at the same time he was, with most others, still unwilling to lose any opportunity of avoiding further bloodshed. While, therefore, steps were taken to renew the army, and place it under a leader of undoubted ability and energy, means were also adopted to bring the intentions of the United States home to the minds of the natives more completely than had been done before. To this end, the Iroquois friendly to the United States were to go westward; Brant was invited to Philadelphia; Colonel Trueman, with a friendly message, was sent from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) to the Maumee; Colonel Hardin, with a similar message, was despatched to Sandusky; Captain Hendricks, chief of the Stockbridge Indians, was urged to attend the convention of the natives in the Northwest; and General Rufus Putnam, of Marietta, was authorized to go into the Indian country and make a treaty with as many tribes as he could. But all was of no avail; the most that could be done was to procure the submission of existing difficulties to a great council to be held in the following year, 1793, and this was obtained through the emissaries of the Six Nations. Brant visited Philadelphia, but did not return to his Western confederates; Hendricks stayed away from the council; Trueman and Hardin were murdered before reaching their destination; and General Putnam's treaty, made at Vincennes, was of no avail, having never been ratified by the Senate.

And here we pause for a moment, to notice a slight error of Judge Burnet in relation to the mission of Trueman. He states* that Trueman and Hardin went on the same embassy, leaving Fort Washington some time in June. He also observes, that "the discrepancies which have appeared as to the time, manner, and circumstances of that unfortunate embassy are somewhat remarkable." Such is, indeed, the fact, and we will note them, although unimportant in themselves, as one of the curiosities of historical detail. Marshall and Butler, in their Kentucky Histories, speak of Trueman as sent by Wilkinson; Atwater, in his History of Ohio, says he

* p. 129.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was sent by Wayne ; Judge Burnet, in a former publication, the Transactions of the Ohio Historical Society, alleged that he was sent by Harmar ; this, in the work before us, he speaks of as an error, and states, what is the truth, that he was a messenger of the United States executive, under instructions from the Secretary of War.* The author of the Notes now says he left Cincinnati in June ; but in the fifth volume of the American State Papers, p. 243, we have a statement by William May, who says that he (May) was sent, on or about the 13th of April, " to follow on the trail of Trueman, who, with a French baker and another man, was sent as a flag to the Indians." He afterwards mentions the discovery of Trueman's body and those of his companions, " scalped and stripped." Many circumstances render this statement suspicious, such as the fact that Trueman's instructions are dated in Philadelphia, April 3d, and that his death was not heard of until June 28th, even at Vincennes ; and yet there is no reason on the face of it to question May's account. But from a letter in Dillon's Indiana, Vol. I., p. 312, written by Wilkinson, we learn that one *Freeman* left Fort Washington for the Indians on the 7th of April, and in the same letter May is ordered to follow on his track. It was then Freeman, and not Trueman, beyond a doubt, whose body May found. That it was not that of the latter we know, because we have in Cist's Cincinnati Miscellany, Vol. I., p. 18, another letter from Wilkinson, which clears up all difficulties, and enables us to correct our author ; it is dated May 24th, and states that " Hardin and Trueman left us day before yesterday, the former for Sandusky, the latter for the Maumee."

But although the pacific overtures of 1792 availed so little, Washington was determined to send messengers the next spring whose position and characters should command respect. He at first selected Charles Carroll and Charles Thompson ; but as they declined the nomination, Benjamin Lincoln, Timothy Pickering, and Beverly Randolph were chosen instead, and about the last of April left Philadelphia for the West. Of their proceedings Judge Burnet gives a full account. They were of the most conciliatory and pacific character. Every thing that could be done with propriety

* *American State Papers*, V. 230.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was done to allay the passions of the Indians and the jealousy of the English, who did not like it that they had not been called in as mediators. But all was in vain; the savages had worsted Harmar and annihilated St. Clair; they also fully expected aid from England, having received beyond doubt intimations from the British agents that the war between the United States and the mother country would be renewed; intimations which Lord Dorchester, in his famous speech of February, 1794, before the final conflict, fully seconded. The genuineness of this speech, it is true, was denied by Judge Marshall in his Life of Washington, and the note in Mr. Sparks's great work (Vol. X., p. 394) might lead one to suppose that he agreed with the earlier biographer; but we have reason to know that Mr. Sparks is satisfied that the speech is genuine, and the discovery of a certified manuscript copy among Brant's papers, made by Mr. Stone, places the fact beyond question. The commissioners of Washington were, therefore, forced to retrace their steps, and then Wayne was instructed to make his entrance, which he did slowly, but with such skill that the Indians found themselves outdone in their own particular branch of warfare, skulking and surprising, and had lost all their moral strength and their confidence before the battle of August 20th, 1794,—the battle which closed not only the Indian war, properly so called, but also the border contests that had lasted since Connolly, in 1774, began his Indian skirmishes, in order to excuse his expenditure of the treasures of the Old Dominion.

If our reader will for a moment dwell upon the course of proceeding we have thus hastily sketched, he will see that Washington, when a war had been rashly entered upon,—as the war of 1790 to 1795 certainly had been, by the expedition of Harmar,—was not, therefore, unwilling to approach the other party in a spirit of concession and compromise, even after that other party had been successful. Had St. Clair's campaign proved fortunate, instead of ruinous, the reasons for concession and pacific measures would have been vastly stronger. And can it be doubted, that, if we had paused at the Rio del Norte, and proper commissioners, with the power of offering just and wise concessions, had been sent to Mexico, our own consciences and the judgment of the world would have acquitted us, where both will now convict

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

us, — and this equally whether we had succeeded, or, like Washington, failed in the effort to secure peace without further bloodshed ?

Before leaving this subject of the Indian wars, we wish to call the attention of our readers to the last message sent by the Indians to Messrs. Randolph, Lincoln, and Pickering ; an abstract of it may be found in the work before us, page 149, or the whole in the fifth volume of American State Papers, page 356 ; it is, we think, among the best papers to be met with in the diplomacy of nations, savage or civilized.

Among the most remarkable men connected with the period of which we are writing was General Wilkinson, and we cannot but hope that some one will attempt his biography before it is too late. His connection with Burr, and his failures during the war of 1812, have thrown a shade over his character and talents ; but he possessed abilities of a very rare kind, and if unworthy of confidence, he was surely one of the profoundest and most successful concealers of roguery that ever lived ; for three protracted trials, before a court of inquiry, the House of Representatives, and a court martial, failed to lead to his conviction on any of the charges brought against him. His popular power was unbounded ; he absolutely ruled Kentucky at one time, though a mere private man, and one lately from beyond the mountains. In his dealings with Burr, he was either innocent, or too deep for one who was not easily duped. As a business man, he opened the trade of the Mississippi. As a writer and speaker, he was perfectly adapted to his sphere. In social life, he exercised a fascination even over his enemies, and none, however prejudiced, could resist the charm of his eloquence, his manner, and his most subtle flattery.

But it is time that we ceased these rambling, and we fear sadly uninteresting, remarks on the past of the West, to suggest some more connected thoughts on its history and its probable future.

Upon the surface of the earth there is no land which ought to be more interesting to us than the vast and wealthy realm which lies upon the Mississippi and its tributaries. The dead or dying hero is no more worthy of our regard than the newborn infant. Beyond the Alleghanies is to be tried the great question of our age and race, — that of self-government, as we call it, or, more properly, the question whether we can and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will submit ourselves to the government of God. There is a Pagan Democracy, which looks to real self-control, or, in other words, no control at all, which demands its own rights, and aims at nothing higher than happiness ; but there is also a Christian Democracy, which bows to the Controller of all, looks to the rights of others and its own duties, and aims at justice, truth, and God's kingdom among men. Upon those Western prairies, among those Western "knobs," along those winding rivers, and by the side of the countless little water-courses and "dry runs" of that vast valley are the rival spirits of Heathen and Christian Democracy to contend for supremacy ; already the battle is begun.

And what a battle-field ! From the Alleghanies to the Rocky mountains, from the frozen lakes of the North to the tepid waters of the Gulf of Mexico ! Every soil, every climate, every variety of surface. Of all the great products of the world, coffee is the only one which does not, or may not, grow there. Take the people of Britain, Ireland, France, Holland, Germany, Italy, and Spain, and place the whole in the valley beyond the Appalachians, and it would continue to ask for "more." Ohio alone, without sinking a pit below the level of her valleys, could supply coal equal to the amount dug from the mines of England and Wales for twenty-five hundred years ; and Ohio is but a pigmy, in the way of bitumen, compared with Western Pennsylvania and Virginia. Iron abounds from Tennessee to Lake Erie, and forms the very mountains of Missouri and Arkansas. Salt wells up from secret storehouses in every Northwestern State. Lead enough to shoot the human race extinct with is raised from the great metallic dikes of Illinois and Wisconsin. Copper and silver beckon all trusting capitalists to the shores of Lake Superior. And mark the water-courses, the chain of lakes, the immense plains graded for railroads by Nature's own hand, the reservoirs of water waiting for canals to use them. Already the farmer far in the interior woods of Ohio or Indiana may ship his produce at his own door to reach Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or New Orleans, and every mile of its transit shall be by canal, steamboat, or rail-car.

What a land is this for Democracy to try her hand in ! How different from the hard, rough Attica, where the olive-tree, the peasant's cow and pig combined in one, clung to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the fissured rock century after century, yielding its butter and lard; where the humming swarms of Hymettus were instead of the sugar-cane, and pastures and fields, and ease and plenty were not tempting men to sloth and neglect. Is not the very wealth of the West to be its ruin? Can virtue and self-control exist without hard labor and struggles? And can labor be the characteristic of a land so reeking with abundance?

Let us enter that land, and choose its most typical State, Kentucky; let us look at its towns, its people, its inner history, and see what light we can gather to aid us in a Yankee guess at the time to come. We leave the Ohio valley; we ascend the hills, if those deserve the name which are only "elevations of depression," the ridges left where the water has gullied the plain;* — how rounded, how feminine the landscape! Over the gentle undulations, symmetrical as the bust of Venus, the ripening wheat, the rising corn-fields, spread to the shadow of the emerald maple-boughs, or the feathery beeches. The blue sky softens in the distance into a hazy, sleepy white; the tulip-tree, left alone in the pasture, lifts its branchless trunk seventy or eighty feet heavenward, and the broad, glossy leaves twinkle and wink in the sunbeams; the cattle lie dozing, only their molar teeth wakeful; the pigs are deep in the mire by the brook-side; a gaunt horse, dragging after him at the plough-tail an unwilling negro, walks between the corn-rows, trampling, not eradicating, the weeds; through the open door of the farm-house, as you pass, you may see the mistress *lazing* in her easy-chair; when you reach the town before us, you may find her helpmate talking politics at the tavern door.

And now we come upon the town, the county seat. How old it looks! Nature so young and vigorous, and this poor place so decrepit and halt! The stone house at the corner has not a whole window in it, and the chimneys look more ancient than the Pyramids; the hewn-log dwelling to the left totters and reels as if the steaming bar-room next door kept it perpetually half-drunk; the hotel itself, red, and brick, and brazen, is the symbol of impudence and brutality, — of that

* Such is the case, although the hills are from two to three hundred feet high; their tops are the true level of the country.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Heathen Democracy whose life-blood is whiskey, and whose breath is oaths.

Let us join the group round the old gentleman, who, with his chair in the street, his feet on the window-sill, his left hand in his ruffled shirt-bosom, and his cud in his cheek, is laying down the law, pointed off with spurts of tobacco-juice. These men, common as they look, are not common men; lazy as they appear, leaning against the shoulder-polished door-posts, they are full of energy and ability. Such men as these won the battle of Buena Vista, and will rule the world, if they choose to. Here is one, hard-featured and stern, with full veins, and a complexion like half-tanned ox-hide, who would, like Harry Daniel, of Mount Sterling,* murder the brother of his wife and see her go crazy, and yet walk his way with an easy conscience, or, at any rate, the pretence of one. Next to him sits a man who could wage war with the human race for a lifetime, and enjoy it; a man of the Middle Ages, with all the vices of feudalism and all those of our money-seeking age combined. He has made his fortune by hunting up invalid titles, purchasing and prosecuting the legal claim, and turning the innocent holder to the dogs. And yet at home no one is kinder, more thoughtful, almost self-sacrificing. Send him to Mexico, and humanity is capable of no crime from which he would turn, or at which he would shudder. Take him to Boston, and his manner will be as pleasing as his conversation will be original. Search his pockets, and you will find a plan for defrauding a neighbour of his farm, a most affectionate letter to an absent daughter, a bowie-knife, and Paradise Lost.

Beyond him, notice that face. How clear the eye, how confident the mouth, how strong and firm the chin! If he speaks, you will hear a voice like the Eolian harp, pouring forth words of such sweetness that the bees might cling upon his lips. If he moves, it is the Indian's motion, quiet and strong as sunlight. In his mind the Higher Democracy is forming itself a home; and amid the low contests of politics, he will be, unconsciously, acting as the messenger of

* Henry, commonly called Harry, Daniel, of Mount Sterling, Montgomery county, Kentucky, shot his brother-in-law in open court, March 5th, 1845. Both were, in wealth and standing, among the first men of the neighbourhood. Daniel was acquitted, and is now again a leader in his district.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the great Friend of man. Another comes by with a quick, springy step, as if with ankle-joints of India-rubber; he stops, joins in the discussion; words pour from his tongue more rapidly than the ear can drink them; he looks round, his eye all seriousness, and his mouth all smiles; men catch his idea, though they cannot his syllables, and their nods show that he has hit some nail on the head. That man, slight as a girl, might be safely trusted to lead any corps in any battle; and yet in his life he never struck a blow. Go for ten miles round, inquire in any household, and you will hear of him as the kind adviser, the steadfast friend, the unostentatious helper; many a son has he saved from the gambling-table, the race-course, or the deadly duel, begun with rifles and finished with knives;—and he, too, is a child of the soil.

Now consider, that, while the murderer and the victim of assassination become known to you through the press, the virtues of the patriotic politician or the village philanthropist make no noise in the world. Believe us, also, that, while the towns and taverns of these Western States, reeking with tobacco and whiskey, are symbols of the evil Democracy of our land, and the bullies and cut-throats, the knaves and robbers, are its true children; and though you might, on first looking at such a society as you may see in almost any Western town, think anarchy was close at hand, yet are the villages ever improving, the taverns themselves growing more decent, and anarchy is going farther and farther away. Remember that this Kentucky was settled by men perfectly their own masters; no government, no religion, no police, no restraining power of any kind save the voice of God in their own breasts. Remember that among them were the most reckless, unprincipled, and blood-thirsty of human beings. Remember that for twenty years this population, thus gathered in anarchy, was demoralized by a border warfare, full of atrocities on both sides. Call to mind, that, without attachment to the Union, the people of Kentucky were courted by Spain, France, and England, and were more than once nigh severing themselves from the Atlantic States. And when you have recalled these things, observe how out of anarchy*

* This is not too strong a term; in 1776, George Rogers Clark called the people together to take measures to procure a recognition of their existence by Virginia, or to set up for themselves; there was then absolutely no

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has come a regular and untroubled government; out of indifference or antagonism to the Union, a true devotion to it; and out of a population scarce cognizant of law, a society which, even in its excesses and violations of statute, aims, however blindly, to obey the law of justice and public good. To understand the West, you must remember that it is socially a youth, in a state of transition, to be compared rather with England under the Plantagenets than with England now. You find, consequently, strange mixtures of statute law and Lynch law, of heathen brutality and the most Christian excellence, of disregard for human life and self-forgetting philanthropy. But amid all the confusion, you may find evidence, we believe, that the Higher Democracy, the rule of God, is advancing.

And here we may relate a curious scene, calculated to illustrate our meaning, which took place in a part of the State where some of us from "Down East" were visiting a few years since. It was a county town that we were staying at, and the Circuit Court was in session. The presiding judge was a large, kindly, easy gentleman, respected and beloved by most that knew him. But still, like all public men in Kentucky, he had his enemies, persons that he had charged against as suitors, or rebuked as witnesses, or reprimanded as jurymen; and among them was a sort of half-outlaw who dwelt upon the outskirts of the town we were in. This man, silent, unsocial, and determined, had vowed his revenge, and the judge was always on the alert to meet his insult or his knife, as the case might be, and never saw him but he kindled from his kindly quietude like a chafed mastiff. On the second day of our visit, as it chanced, the worthy magistrate, as he walked court-ward after dinner, spied his old foe on one of the wooden benches which are placed under the trees around Western court-houses, and took it into his head that the semi-barbarian looked at him in a very peculiar, and of course insulting manner. Instantly he kindled, fixing his eye upon the enemy, who of course did not lower his; the judge strode toward the supposed delinquent, and without a word uttered, lifting his stout hickory sapling, dealt the offender blow upon blow across the face. Not many blows

---

government.—See Butler, Marshall, Morehead, or Clark's own Journal, in Dillon's *Indiana*, I. 128, &c.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fell, however, ere the semi-savage plucked from his pocket a pistol, which, clapping it against the assailant's waistcoat, he fired; the judge staggered and fell. Instantly the death-dealer fled, but close upon his heels were two scions of the fallen magistrate, armed and equipped with pistol and bowie-blade. Two shots fired *in transitu* missed, and the knife thrown, as the Indian casts his tomahawk, passed the intended victim and stood quivering in the earth; the murderer reached his home unhurt. Then rose the cry of popular vengeance, for all loved the judge, and thirsted to avenge him. But vengeance must be legal; so, while the people watched round the outlaw's house, which he and a brother were barricading, the proper writs were issued for their arrest, and messengers sent to the four winds to summon a bench of justices to try the sudden crime. Meanwhile the fallen victim was stripped, and probes, knives, and lint were made ready; but, thank Heaven, to no purpose; for the ball, while it had bruised and thrown down the worthy man, had not — strange to say — even broken the skin, and was found somewhere among his vestments, the explosion having burnt a hole in his silk waistcoat. Then came the siege of the outlaw's den; protruded rifles, solemn oaths on the one side not to injure, violent ones on the other not to yield; nor was there much prospect of peace until news came that the accused had committed no murder. When he learned this, the astounded life-taker, surprised out of his boldness, gave himself up, and under due warrant and the guidance of a vast self-called *posse*, walked toward the court-house, where the justices were meanwhile gathering. Thither also came the judge, with a hole in his vest merely, his vitals untouched; and the court opened. Evidence was heard, and very brief argument. This done, the magistrates laid their wise heads together, and, having pondered all things, — *fined each party one cent and dismissed the case!* Then, leaving their high seats, the judge from the bar rose to the bench, and the ordinary business of the court went on.

But strange judicial scenes are not to be met with in the wilds of Kentucky alone. In Cincinnati, not many years since, the Court of Common Pleas appointed a clerk under circumstances which were of a character to excite suspicions as to the motives of the judges. The bar was not disposed to acquiesce, although the members had, in truth, nothing to say or do in the premises. And not only did the lawyers

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

object, but the people also, in their majesty, objected. Two meetings, one of the bar, and one of the public, were therefore called at the court-house, to be held just before court hours, to take the matter into consideration. At the meeting of the profession, proper resolutions were passed and ordered to be presented to the court; and that being adjourned, the masters in large numbers organized themselves. After the choice of a committee, it was suggested that it would be as well to examine the judges as to some alleged attempts at bribery on the part of relatives of the successful candidate for the clerkship, which was a lucrative office. A second committee was accordingly appointed to wait upon the magistrates and desire their presence. Three of them, and one just off the bench, answered the popular summons; and then was to be seen the singular Democratic phenomenon of a judge standing upon the bar-table in his own court-room, in the midst of an assembly of merchants, mechanics, and laborers, turning from side to side, and undergoing an examination in reference to his official acts, and the efforts made to influence those acts improperly. The popular meeting, having heard the judges through, decided against the appointment that had been made, and then adjourned, giving place to the court, whose hour of meeting had long since passed. When the court was opened, the proceedings of the bar were read, but the president judge, who had refused the subpœna of the public meeting, treated the whole matter with contempt, and insisted upon consummating the appointment by entry on the record; this his fellow-magistrates, who had become alarmed, objected to, and one of the three, one who had opposed the appointment all along, spoke with much warmth, and was applauded by the people. The president judge ordered the clerk *pro tem.* to hand him the record, but the clerk declined; he commanded the sheriff to adjourn the court *sine die*, but the sheriff refused; he commenced an address to the bar and people, and was then fairly hissed from the bench! * The decision of the public and bar, thus announced, was not to be resisted, and the appointment was annulled.

The execution of Smith Maythe in Kentucky, in July,

* *Cincinnati Gazette*, April 13th, 1834. *Cincinnati Republican.* Pamphlet published by the Bar, &c.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1841, affords another illustration of that curious mixture of law and lawlessness, wholly free from passion, to which we have referred. Maythe was a Cincinnati boy of the most desperate character. He shrunk from no crime, and yet escaped, by one means and another, the consequences proper to his outrageous conduct. At length, in company with one Couch, he robbed a drover in Grant county, and cut his throat; but the wound not proving mortal at once made it probable that the law could do no more than imprison the criminals, and prisons, it was known, could not hold Maythe. The farmers and others who lived near by the spot where the crime was committed, being convinced that one who attempted a murder was in truth a murderer, though the law would not adjudge him to be so, and fearing that Maythe would be turned loose to commit further crimes, determined to execute him themselves, in obedience to what they deemed the true law of the case. To the number of several hundred, they met and organized for the purpose of carrying their plans into effect. There was no concealment, no passion; but calm determination. Thirty-six hours' notice was given the criminals of their fate; the jailer was not asked to open the jail, as that would have ruined him, and its doors were forced. A clergyman was provided, and five hours were allowed the culprits to spend in his company; three speeches, praying them to desist, were listened to by the executioners, respectfully, but without causing any change of purpose. When the hour came, the whole body formed a procession and bore the murderers to the spot where their crime had been committed, and there, upon the tree under which their victim was found lying, hanged them.

This was all anarchy, but it was the anarchy of law-abiding men. It was no riot or mob; the proceedings were those of a people whose parents had settled a wilderness, had defended their hearths against the savage, and had begun a system of obedience to a self-imposed rule of right; these men regarded their doings as an extension of that system. And is it not true, that, under Democratic influences, many changes and advances in law will necessarily be made through the breach of law? Will judges and legislators, on many points, ever feel that they can carry God's law into effect, until popular feeling, overstepping statutes, leads the way? We may illustrate our meaning, which is not to excuse dis-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

loyalty to law, but to state what we believe to be a fact, by a single instance. Would seduction ever have been punished as it deserves, if there had not been on the part of individuals, juries, and "the masses," most distinct and emphatic protests — with pistols, verdicts of insanity, and shouts of congratulation — against the old heathen English common law which gave a man days' wages for the ruin of his daughter, because by her ruin he lost her labor? We may regret that Democracy should entail such evils on us, but, like the mischiefs of an election, these evils are the necessary friction of our machinery. Where the people rule, they must be heard; and on many subjects, not connected with politics, they never will be heard, we fear, unless through movements and acts in themselves revolutionary.

Now, the younger a Democratic community is, the more of this irregular action there will be; and in such a community the true question is, not whether laws are broken by popular will, but whether a regard for law, and a perception of its benefits, is growing or decreasing. In the West we believe such a regard and perception to be on the advance.

We have already adverted to the change of sentiment toward the general government, but it deserves to be more dwelt upon, as an evidence of what we say. When the federal constitution was discussed in the Virginia convention, Kentucky (then a part of the Old Dominion) sent fourteen delegates, eleven of whom voted against its adoption. And this vote was given after mature deliberation, and a full knowledge of the instrument. In the July previous to that convention (1787), Harry Innis, attorney-general of Kentucky, wrote to the governor of Virginia as follows: — "I am decidedly of opinion that this Western country will in a few years act for itself, and erect an independent government." * This spirit continued with little abatement at least till the time of the famous resolutions of 1798, when John Breckenridge announced in the legislature of Kentucky the doctrine, that if Congress attempted to enforce any laws which the States objected to, "it is then the right and duty of the several States to nullify those acts, and protect their citizens from their operation." And this doctrine received the unanimous support of the Senate, the approval of the

* Marshall's *Kentucky*, I. 270, 287.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

governor, and met with but three opponents in the House, one of whom, William Murray of Franklin county, advanced the arguments since expanded and urged by Daniel Webster.*

Nor was Kentucky alone in her nullification; Ohio, in 1820–21, having taxed the United States Branch Banks fifty thousand dollars each, and having collected the tax by main force, passed resolutions recognizing and approving the doctrines asserted by Kentucky in 1798.† But has nullification remained the theory of the West? By no means. In February, 1833, Kentucky took back, in most express words, her former theory, and affirmed the powers of the central government and the federal courts;‡ and although Ohio has not, we believe, so directly proved her change of views, it is perfectly well known that she is anti-nullification through every fibre.

Now all this change has been, we think, not owing to any change in political parties, or to a mere selfish conviction that the Union is for the interests of the West; it is a growing regard for, and loyalty to, law, as embodied in the national rule, that has caused the change of feeling, and that will preserve allegiance to the Union henceforward unimpaired.

There is another episode in Western history, which, in relation to this subject, is worthy of notice; we refer to the Whiskey Insurrection. It grew out of Alexander Hamilton's taxation of spirits, in 1790–91. The farmers of Western Pennsylvania and Virginia could not send their grain down the Mississippi, for it was closed by Spain; and neither railroad, canal, nor turnpike offered any easy conveyance over the mountains. The rye was therefore condensed into whiskey, as a horse could carry but four bushels of the grain, while it could bear the whiskey distilled from twenty-four bushels. It was natural enough, therefore, in those days, when alcohol was regarded as a necessary of life, that the frontier men should deem themselves aggrieved, and the tax unequally inflicted. The consequence was a threefold rebellion; in the first place, the leading men of the suffering region, Albert Gallatin among them, protested, and in no measured terms, against the system of the Secretary; in the second place, the more

* Butler's *Kentucky*, 282–289.
† *American State Papers*, XXI. 653, 654. ‡ Butler, 289.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thoughtless and reckless proceeded to tar and feather the collectors of the tax, and to commit other acts of violence; while, in the third place, a systematic opposition to the general government was organized, and measures were taken to produce a universal rising of the people. Mr. Gallatin and his friends, seeing how matters tended, soon desisted from their violent words; and although they had gone the length of proclaiming that they would withhold from the tax-officers all assistance, and "all the comforts of life which depend upon those duties that as men and fellow-citizens we owe to each other,"* they joined the peace party. The individual rioters, though troublesome, were not dangerous. It was the third body of opponents which threatened serious mischief, and spread a spirit akin to that of the Jacobins of France. At the head of this party was David Bradford, an attorney and politician of some note. He apparently thought that by means of the Democratic societies, and other similar associations, he could manage the Western people as he pleased; and, taking advantage of a very unwise step on the part of the government, namely, the sending of offenders against the excise law east of the mountains to be tried, he proceeded to kindle the spirit of resistance.

It was not hard to do this, as it was easy to compare the course adopted by the federal government to that of England before the Revolution, which had required criminals to be sent to Britain, and by means of a society similar to, but independent of, the regular Democratic clubs, he was able to effect an organization which was in reality formidable. The fact, that it was not an affiliated society that Bradford used, deserves especial notice, as Washington and others ascribed the Western difficulties to those associations. In the neighbourhood of Pittsburg were three clubs, two of them independent of the Eastern bodies, the third a regular, affiliated scion of the orthodox stock; — in this last nothing was done to encourage outbreaks; in the two former every thing was done; and moreover, when the crisis came, the Eastern clubs united in condemning the measures of Bradford and his friends.† Those measures were such, that the United States

* *American State Papers*, XX. 108.

† For Washington's views, see Sparks, X. 429, 437, &c. For proof of our statement, see Brackenridge's *Incidents of the Insurrection*, III. 25, 148,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

marshal and General Neville, the inspector of the district, were fired upon by a party, while serving a warrant, and the next morning, July 16th, 1794, General Neville's house was surrounded by a number of men who wished to destroy his papers. These men belonged to the Mingo Creek association, one of the two already referred to, and do not appear to have contemplated any criminal proceedings beyond the destruction of the inspector's official documents. He, however, was alarmed, and, without waiting for an attack, fired upon the crowd, wounding five and killing one of them.

This of course brought matters to a crisis. The militia of the Mingo Creek settlement, who were all embodied in the club, were instantly notified, and the next morning found Neville's house surrounded by five hundred men. To meet this force, Neville had but his own negroes and family, and a body of eleven soldiers from the garrison of Fort Pitt. Regarding the case as desperate, the inspector managed to escape and conceal himself; the besiegers, learning this, demanded his papers, and also required that the soldiers should come out and give up their arms. The United States officer was willing to have the house searched, and whatever the riotors pleased taken away, but absolutely refused to capitulate. Firing then commenced; the buildings were ignited; the regulars forced to surrender; the property of Neville destroyed; and one of the leading insurgents killed. This killing took place after a call from the house to stop firing, and was in consequence of the exposure consequent upon that call; a fact which made the rioters regard it as murder. We speak of those without the house as rioters; but they were perfectly organized, and the attack was deliberately made under the direction of a committee, who sat upon a hillock and ordered the various movements.

The rebellion being now fairly opened, meetings were held, characterized by a fury which alarmed all concerned. The United States mail was stopped and robbed by Bradford and others, to learn who were their leading enemies in Pittsburg; these, when known, the people of that town were

---

and Findley's History of it, p. 166. These were both on the spot, and men of character. The proceedings of the Eastern societies may be found in the *United States Gazette* of August 26th, September 1st and 6th, 1794, and the *Boston Independent Chronicle* of August 18th and October 6th, 1794; or other papers of the day.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forced to expel; and it was proposed to attack the arsenal and seize the United States arms, and to sack and burn the city at the Fork. Terror pervaded all classes, and it was with great difficulty that Pittsburg was saved from a conflagration. And when commissioners went West to strive to adjust matters, the Western people refused the overtures of the government, who put the matter to vote in the primary assemblies. Then followed the march of troops, the flight of Bradford and others, and the general submission.

Such is a brief outline of this movement, as given by Findley, Brackenridge, Hamilton, in his report of August,* and the papers of the time. Now, is it possible that such an opposition to law and government could be organized at this time anywhere in the West? A repetition of Shays's rebellion in Massachusetts and New Hampshire is just as possible, — just as probable.

We believe the experiment of Democracy at the West, then, to have tended thus far from, not toward, anarchy; we believe the higher view, of submission to God's will, to have gained upon the lower one, of self-government. There is far too much of Pagan Democracy still, beyond all question; far too much of laziness, idleness, drunkenness, brutality, blood-thirstiness; the leading power is still selfishness, and vanity is still the most popular teacher; but, despite all this, we feel assured that a spirit of true self-submission is growing; and, in the midst of populations that seem lost in sensuality and idle gratification, are coming up men of the highest and most practical Christian wisdom. And this we ascribe, not, as some do, entirely to the influence of New England Puritan principles transplanted to the West, but equally, at least, to the springing up of the right principles there among the native-born. Such men are found where Puritan principles have never reached. And though the wealth of the land will embarrass the growth of good habits, as it does the growth of corn, by an immense production of weeds, we have confidence that a power is at work that will root the tares out, and leave the grain unhurt.

When we say that we do not ascribe the progress of the West in wisdom to the transplanting of New England principles, we do not mean, of course, to undervalue those prin-

* *American State Papers*, XX.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ciples ; our danger is, of necessity, a likelihood to overestimate them. And we rejoice to believe that every year carries more of the better portion of the "universal Yankee nation" into the recesses of the West. Miss Beecher's plan of sending teachers from New England thither is full of sound sense, and promises great good ; as single women, or married ones, her emigrants will be "teachers" equally. But we would suggest, that, independent of our corner of the Union, there is an abundance of good and wise souls always pressing forward. If Democracy is not a form of Anti-christ, every community standing as the West did, without rule, must of necessity grow self-submissive, obedient to God's law. If the West has not done so, then indeed do we fear that our idea of society is all wrong and evil ; but the truth is, we believe, that whatever is truly anti-Christian in the land beyond the mountains, and peculiar to that land, may be traced to slavery, that is, to the foe of Democracy, rather than to a spirit of the largest liberty. Of all the real riots, for example, which have occurred in the West, most — those at Cincinnati in 1836 and 1841, that at Alton, Illinois, that at Lexington, Kentucky, and others elsewhere — have been outbreaks of the spirit of slavery ; a spirit which is by no means confined south of the Ohio. From 1796 to 1807, various efforts were made by the people of Indiana Territory to procure the repeal or suspension of the article of the Ordinance of 1787 forbidding slavery therein ;* and to this hour Ohio retains her Black Laws, which close the public schools to the negro, forbid his appearance as a witness in court where a white is interested, and discourage his entrance into the State. But even this spirit is yielding ; and if that yields, what may not be hoped for ?

In fine, let none conclude, from reports of assassinations and strifes in the great valley, that anarchy is on the increase ; even the "street-fights" and murders of Tennessee grow out of her stringent law against duelling.† Consider that you may travel ten thousand miles in those Western States, where a peace-officer would be as great a curiosity as an elephant,

* *American State Papers*, XVI. 68, 160 ; XX. 387, 450, 467, 477, 485.

† The brother of our present chief-magistrate, now one of our representatives abroad, was tried for killing a man in a street-fight, and acquitted on the ground of self-defence. These fights are growing less common and less reputable.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and meet with no harm; remember that Cincinnati, with a population bordering on eighty thousand, has no police worth mentioning, and yet is as quiet and safe as any place of the size on the earth, we presume; and recall to mind, what we have already noticed, that Kentucky began in anarchy, and has risen to law, — that she was once the Alsatia of the United States, and is now in comparison quiet and peaceable, — that she once hung to the Union by but a thread, and is now bound to it with clamps of iron; and you cannot but have some faith in the workings of Democracy.

ART. IV. — 1. *Amy Herbert.* — 2. *Gertrude.* — 3. *Laneton Parsonage.* — 4. *Margaret Percival.* By a Lady. Edited by the REV. W. SEWELL, B. D. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1845 – 1847.

THERE is a general distrust of the works commonly called religious novels. We usually find in them either an intolerable infusion of doctrinal theology, or a mixture absolutely revolting of earthly passion and spiritual pride; so that it may be deemed lucky, if they are only tedious and uninteresting. We do not so much wonder at the failure of the writers of fiction in a task requiring rare powers both of mind and heart, as lament that they should have undertaken it. For to succeed in such an attempt, a thorough understanding of human nature, an appreciation of its capacities, a keen perception of its failings, a sense even of what is ridiculous in its follies and caprices, and a Christian severity mingled with compassion for its weakness, are indispensable. And the writer must not be wanting in power of description, in liveliness of fancy, nor in simplicity, if not in beauty, of style.

What, then, is a religious novel? It would be more easy to tell what books have been so called, than to point to many deserving the name. We may, however, say what such a novel ought to be. In the first place, like a religious character, it should be perfectly unpretending. Romance, in the common acceptation of the term, should find no place in it, and from its pages every trace of morbid sensibility should be banished. The scenes should be such as are passing

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

around us, or as we ourselves are engaged in from day to day; for there can be little profit (and of course profit more than amusement is the object of such works) in picturing to ourselves only what is to be done on extraordinary occasions, or in circumstances in which few people are ever placed. The imagination is sufficiently excited in that way by the ordinary works of fiction. We want a religious novel, as we need our religion, to sanctify to us our daily life, and to show what faith, hope, and charity can accomplish when made to act upon "the minor morals."

In the second place, the characters of a religious novel should be such as we are continually finding in the next town, or the next street, or the next house; not patterns of perfection contrasted with monsters of iniquity, but people whom we can admire, love, pity, or dislike, though perfectly aware that they exist only on the pages of a book. We must see their follies and their faults, — their vices, it may be; but they must not be shown up, as it were, in connection with disquisitions upon the depravity of human nature, or set before us with the cutting severity of sarcastic criticism. In short, we want Miss Austen's homely scenes and every-day people, drawn with Miss Austen's wonderful power of perception and discrimination of character, without her occasional implied bitterness of satire.

Moreover, we desire to find a cheerful spirit animating the pages of such a book. It would be difficult to explain satisfactorily why a religious novel should be necessarily of a gloomy cast, with every thing like a lively, or even occasionally playful, style banished from its pages. We are sometimes tempted, when reading books of this sort, to repeat the exclamation of a friend, on looking at the picture of a good man, — "It is not cheerful enough for a Christian." We know that religion itself has its trials, as well as its consolations; but why should the former be continually brought before us, while the latter are carefully kept out of sight? It may be because we are so ready to seek for comfort when mortification and sorrow would be our better part, that the authors of such books have feared to present to their readers too bright a picture of that joy and peace in believing, which in the best of human beings must always be tempered by regret and remorse for past follies and sins; but it should never be forgotten that godliness hath the promise of the life

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that now is, as well as of that which is to come. Above all, the writer must possess in herself (for we hardly remember any work of this kind that was not written by a woman) that holy temper of mind, and that loving-kindness, which she desires to make attractive in the characters of her story.

We certainly do not find all these requisites in the evangelical writers of England, if Mrs. Sherwood and Charlotte Elizabeth may be taken as representatives of that class. A book the main purpose of which is to unfold and illustrate the peculiar notions of a particular sect or denomination of Christians may be written with power, and the story, skilfully related, may even excite a deep interest, and yet in its effect on the reader's mind be barren of all good fruits. Indeed, we very much doubt whether the writers above named have always exercised a wholesome influence, even on those who, agreeing with them in doctrine, and approving of their method of presenting religious subjects, have found nothing objectionable in their works. We call to mind some of Mrs. Sherwood's stories, of which the effect, if not the object, is to excite a distrust of all innocent gayety, and to make us look with suspicious fear upon every thing around and within us. For that class of novels, of which Dunallan may be taken as a specimen, we have still less respect. We have witnessed a paroxysm of tears over that compound of romance and fanaticism, produced by its highly-wrought and unnatural scenes, which left the mind in no fit state either for thought or for action.

We turn gladly from the consideration of such works as these to Amy Herbert and Gertrude, which are, we believe, Miss Sewell's earliest productions. They are edited by the Rev. W. Sewell of Oxford, and common report attributes the authorship of them to his sister. They answer in a remarkable degree to the idea which we have formed of a good religious tale. Novels, in the usual sense of that word, they are not. Amy Herbert is a story about a child, though not exactly a child's story. We are told that it was "written by a lady for the use of a young member of her own family," and that "the editor is responsible for nothing but recommending its publication, and suggesting a few verbal corrections." * Few girls only twelve years old ever were, or ever

* These words are taken from the short advertisement of the editor,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will be, such as Amy is represented; neither will many women be found possessing a character like Gertrude's. But there is nothing strained or unnatural in what they say and do; their goodness is not unattainable and far removed from our sympathies, but the impression left upon the reader's mind resembles that received from the words and actions of real personages. The writer is a member of the Church of England, and many will object with reason to the frequent introduction of its doctrines in her later works. Laneton Parsonage might be called an illustration or exposition of the Creed, and in Margaret Percival, where the heroine is inclined to Romanism, we have long and unsatisfactory discussions with regard to "the Church." But in Amy Herbert and Gertrude this fault does not exist to an extent sufficient to alarm or offend us. Where any peculiar doctrine is dwelt upon, as in Amy Herbert the belief concerning baptism, it is made so subservient to the Christian spirit of the whole, that the allusions could not be objected to by any who are themselves free from bigotry.

Amy, the only child of Colonel Herbert, resides with her mother in the strictest retirement during her father's absence with the army in India. We do not feel disposed to complain that the child is too good, or has too much the thoughts and feelings of older people, while she is spending a quiet life at the cottage, varied only by an occasional walk to Emmerton Hall, or a visit to her good old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Walton, and a book of fairy tales, at the Rectory. The arrival of the family of Mr. Harrington, Mrs. Herbert's brother, at Emmerton Hall, which had been for several years unoccupied, interrupts the quietness of the scene, and Amy, who had been kept from the evil that is in the world, and surrounded only by favorable influences, begins to find trials and temptations in the society of her cousins, Dora and Margaret. She discovers that the cottage is very small in comparison with the Hall, and that her companions, in consequence of their wealth, take a higher stand than herself.

which thus concludes: — "The editor has willingly undertaken to revise the publication, under the impression that books intended for the young should, as much as possible, be superintended by some clergyman, who may be responsible for their principles." We have no remark to make concerning this impression, but are forced to notice the inconsistency of professing to be responsible for nothing of consequence, while there is at least an implied responsibility with regard to the principles of the book.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She is made to feel her inferiority at first by her cousins, but stands most in awe of her aunt, who is offended at the slightest appearance of what she considers "taking a liberty." The course of Amy's struggles with herself, her mother's constant watchfulness as her child becomes more acquainted with the faults of others and her own, and the effect gradually produced by her meekness, patience, and love, could hardly have been better described.

The visit of Amy to Rochford Park is related with a good deal of humor. Unaccustomed to society and to visiting, and extremely desirous to please and to be liked, she finds herself utterly abashed in the midst of the splendor which she almost enviously admires. The scene at the dinner must be given entire.

"Amy felt almost happy when she had contrived to hide herself behind Dora, and could look at what was going on without being observed; and dinner being announced almost immediately, she kept close by her side, hoping that after all she might not find it as terrible as she had expected. But her hope was soon crushed. There was a slight confusion as they went into the dining-room; no one seemed to know exactly where to place herself; and Amy was obliged to leave Dora, and take the vacant seat between her Aunt Harrington and Mr. Cunningham.

"'George, you will take care of your little neighbour,' said Lord Rochford; 'do find out what she would like to have.'

"The silent Mr. Cunningham turned to Amy and spoke; but whether his words were English, French, or German, it would have been impossible for her in her fright to tell. By persons who were well acquainted with him he was very easily understood; but, in consequence of a defect in the formation of his mouth, his articulation was so indistinct as to be almost unintelligible to strangers; and Amy looked at him with mingled fear and surprise. Again he endeavoured to render his meaning clear; but not a word could Amy comprehend, though, guessing what he would say, she faltered, 'Chicken, if you please,' and then looked at her aunt, and blushed painfully, from the idea that she had done exactly the very thing she ought not. Mr. Cunningham, apparently, was very desirous of seeing her comfortable; for during dinner he made a point of offering her every thing on the table which he thought she might like, and each time he opened his lips Amy's distress revived. But the climax of misery was when, after the dessert was placed on the table, he seemed inclined to enter into conversation with her. Happily, she caught the words, 'Live at Emmerton,' in his first sentence,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and contrived to answer it correctly; but as he went on, the confusion of sound increased, and, perfectly bewildered between endeavouring to make out the meaning of the last question and the dread of hearing a new one, she continued to repeat 'Yes' and 'No' at regular intervals, resolving in her own mind that it would be better to live at the cottage all her life, even if it were twice as small, and she were never to see any one, than be condemned to the penance of talking to Mr. Cunningham.

"Her cousins from the opposite side of the table watched her with considerable amusement, though after a short time Dora's compassion was much excited, and once or twice she attempted to help her, by partly repeating the question when she understood it better than Amy; but this only served to increase Mr. Cunningham's desire to make himself intelligible, and the eagerness with which he went over the ground again rendered the sounds only the more perplexing, so that Dora was obliged to resign Amy to her fate, and wait with patience till Lady Rochford should move.

"The looked-for moment did at last arrive, and Amy's spirits rose like those of a prisoner released from captivity, for nearly at the last moment, having answered 'Yes' when she ought to have said 'No,' she found a large bunch of grapes placed upon her plate, and not liking to confess she had misunderstood, and still less liking to eat them, she was obliged to leave them, and went out wondering whether Mr. Cunningham would remark it, and, if he did, what he would think of her."

We are much interested in the character of Dora, at first proud and apparently selfish, but really generous and open to every good influence, as it improves in the sunshine of Amy's joyous, humble, and loving spirit. The latter part of the story is too much hurried by the rapid succession of events and the number of exciting scenes; but the characters are admirably sustained, and the pathetic effect is very great. The book is one which may be placed without hesitation in the hands of any young person, and there are few who may not derive useful lessons from it, for in it religion is made lovely, and evil shown in its true colors.

There are fewer faults to be found in Gertrude than in any other tale of the kind with which we are acquainted. The plot is simple, and excites little depth of interest; but the writer has most successfully accomplished her object, as expressed in the words of her motto from The Excursion: —

"Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood; look we to ourselves,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A light of duty shines on every day
For all."

The story is an admirable one, and we believe that few persons could read it without turning with a new spirit to "the daily round, the common task." We are introduced in the first scene to the inhabitants of Elsham Priory, Mrs. Courtenay and three of her daughters, and are made to discover at once the peculiarities of each. The absence of sympathy and congeniality in this domestic circle is directly manifest. Two members of the family, Edward and Gertrude, do not appear personally until a later period of the story. The latter has resided for many years with an aunt, whose property after her death is to descend to Gertrude. The complaining and indolent Jane, and the satirical Charlotte, seem quite regardless of any but themselves; while Edith, sincerely desirous of performing faithfully her duties, is immediately interesting. Her character, like most of those in the book, is skilfully delineated. There is a constant and almost painful sense of its incompleteness, such as we are frequently made to experience when we see a really conscientious person making many and great mistakes with regard to duty. With a perfect consciousness of many of her defects, she is yet daily repeating them. The contrast of her faults and struggles with Gertrude's gentleness of temper and disinterested thought for others is represented with great force and distinctness. Edith, engaged with her schools and her visits to the poor, neglects the gentle charities of home, and feels herself misunderstood and uncomfortable, while she does nothing to soften the harshness and selfishness of her sisters, and little to gratify her mother, who is a weak woman, quite incapable of sympathy with her daughter's feelings and principles. The different views of Edith and Gertrude with regard to social duties are illustrated in the following extract from a conversation which took place between the two sisters soon after Gertrude's return to her family.

"'Don't you think there is a difference between relations and other people?' said Gertrude.

"'Not much; only that if they are disagreeable, they are ten times worse than they would be as strangers, because you can't escape from them.'

"'Ah!' said Gertrude, 'that is the very point; I know we can-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not escape from them, and so, I suppose, it was intended we should make the best of them.'

"Edith sighed. 'I don't mean, of course,' she said, 'that I do not love my brothers or sisters, or that I have no interest in my connections; but it would be impossible to dance attendance upon them all day without neglecting other duties.'

"'I dare say it is difficult,' said Gertrude; 'and I know I am not a fair judge; but perhaps a little "dancing attendance," as you call it, might win their hearts, and induce them to help in the duties.'

"'It might be so,' answered Edith, thoughtfully; 'but I don't think it likely at home.'

"Gertrude did not urge the subject. She had given a hint, and she left it to work its own way. They walked on for several minutes in silence.

"'You don't mean to say,' observed Edith at length, 'that you would give up visiting poor people, and attending to schools.'

"'No, no,' replied Gertrude; 'all that I mean is that our duties are like the circles of a whirlpool, and that the innermost includes home; and the next, perhaps, the rich and poor immediately about us. The circumstances of our position in life, our fortune and talents, seem in fact to point out our business.'

"'Rich people!' said Edith, in surprise.

"'Yes,' replied Gertrude; 'do you not remember my showing you the other day that Bishop Andrews mentions, among the persons to be interceded for, those who are entitled to his prayers by vicinity of situation; as if that were in itself a sufficient claim?'

"'But surely we should feel so tied down,' said Edith, 'in being forced to think of and care for people, merely because they lived near us.'

"'I don't know that that is an objection; because, if we are not tied down, there may be as much self-will in choosing duties as pleasures.'"—pp. 163, 164.

Her brother was the first who had aroused the mind of Edith to higher aims, and he had become "the very idol of her imagination." Bitter, therefore, is her disappointment, when, notwithstanding all his fine theories and dreams of philanthropy, he shows himself at last "unstable as water"; and bitterly does she show it in her changed manner towards him, and her neglect of his young and beautiful wife. Bitter, too, is her self-reproach in the crisis of his fortunes, on which the chief interest of the plot is made to depend. We give Gertrude's character in the words of the writer, and this extract may be taken as a specimen of her manner of description.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"She had apparently but just entered the house, for she still wore her walking-dress, although her bonnet was thrown aside, as if to enable her more easily to amuse herself with her little playfellow. Her figure was slight and delicate, and her face chiefly remarkable for a high, thoughtful forehead, and a mouth which, although indicating great gentleness, betokened also a spirit of natural energy and decision. Her complexion was sallow, and her clear, dark gray eyes told rather of a sensible, meditative mind, than of any superior quickness of intellect. Yet Gertrude Courtenay was not a person to be seen and forgotten. Even by the side of her beautiful sister-in-law, it might have been doubted which possessed the greatest power of awakening interest. At a first notice, it would have been said that hundreds in the world resembled her, — that such features were to be met with continually; a second glance more firmly riveted attention, from the expression of inward peace which pervaded her countenance; a third established as a certainty that there must be something in her very different from the world; and when she moved and spoke, the charm was completed. There was no resisting the winning tones of that low, clear voice, the softness and quietness of those gentle actions, the least of which seemed inspired by some consideration for another, some wish to give pleasure or comfort. Whether Gertrude's disposition was naturally lively, had often been a question with her friends; and, on a slight acquaintance, it might perhaps have been supposed that some suffering in early childhood had subdued her spirit, and cast a shade over the light-heartedness of youth; but it was an opinion contradicted by the mirth which so frequently lighted up her eye when her manner was the most self-possessed, and by the delight with which she was welcomed by the companions of her own age in their gayest and happiest hours. No one felt her presence a restraint, except in moments of heedless folly, and then one look was sufficient. If she refused to smile, the thoughtless laugh was instantly checked. And yet Gertrude seldom ventured to find fault, and when she did, it was with such humility, such consciousness of her own deficiencies, that no offence could be taken. The magic of her influence was to be found, not in words, — scarcely in actions, — but in her inward, unceasing remembrance of the God in whose presence she lived. It was her earnest endeavour never to forget Him, and the recollection purified her heart and hallowed her daily conduct, until the careless and worldly-minded felt that the atmosphere with which she was surrounded was one in which they could not venture to dwell." — pp. 150, 151.

Gertrude returns to her home on the death of her aunt,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and her presence is like oil upon the troubled waters, though she cannot entirely avert the misfortunes which threaten the family. Her gentle influence, and the effect of her attention even to trifles, are illustrated by the following scene.

"'Mr. Dacre has forgotten us for three days,' said Charlotte, as she lingered one morning in the breakfast-room, a practice which, since Gertrude's return, had become more enticing than formerly.

"'Not forgotten, my dear,' said Mrs. Courtenay; 'but you all tire him out when he is here. I thought he never would have done walking up and down the terrace the last time. Poor man! and the night air is so bad for him.'

"'He is rather a romantic person for an old one,' observed Jane; 'I am sure he likes moonlight a great deal better than I do.'

"'We were matter-of-fact enough that evening,' said Edith. 'He was talking about the poor man who shot Edward's keeper, and settling what was to be done with the wife and children.'

"'Ah, yes!' exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay; 'to be sure, that must be it. I dare say he is gone to see after them now. What a good thing it is to be so kind!'

"'Yes,' said Jane, more earnestly than usual; 'if one were but equal to it. I can fancy a great deal of pleasure in being able to do what he does.'

"'Mr. Dacre is a miserable invalid,' said Edith, shortly. Jane's color rose, and she was about to make an angry reply; when Gertrude, turning to her mother, inquired if she were not intending to go for a drive in the middle of the day.

"'Why, yes, my dear, I did think of it, and Jane too; but why did you ask?'

"'Because, if you were, I thought perhaps you would not mind going by Torrington Heath, and taking Susan Philips a little bundle of clothes we have been looking out for her, that is to say, if it is ready; but I must work hard to finish making up the baby's frock.'

"'Leave it for to-day,' said Edith, 'and come with me to the school; we shall meet Mr. Dacre there, perhaps, and then he will tell us what he has been doing, and you will be able to say any thing you wish.'

"The last words were spoken in a tone which implied that a conversation with Mr. Dacre was an all-powerful temptation; but Gertrude resolutely resisted it.

"'If you would wait till the afternoon,' she replied, 'it would be more convenient, because I really should be glad to finish my work, and I want rather to help Charlotte put in her seeds.'

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"'But you don't mean to say you would stay at home for such a trifle as that?' exclaimed Edith; 'I thought you were very anxious about poor Philips, and I am nearly certain we shall hear something from Mrs. Grantley, if we don't meet Mr. Dacre.'

"'We should not be delayed very long,' said Gertrude; 'and it is such an exquisite morning for gardening, and Charlotte and I have been looking forward to it. You must remember the work, too.'

"'We would take it up ourselves to-morrow,' persisted Edith, 'and it would do just as well, and better, because we should be able to talk to Susan.'

"'I thought,' said Gertrude, 'that if mamma took it, perhaps she would not mind telling Susan how to doctor her baby. I am sure she knows a great deal about it, and we could not help her at all in that way.'

"'If mamma would,' said Edith; 'but she dislikes getting in and out of a carriage.'

"'Perhaps Susan would be able to tell her about the child without giving her that trouble,' said Gertrude. 'Don't call me wilful, Edith; I really do hope to go out with you in the course of the day.'

"'What is that you want me to do, my dear?' inquired Mrs. Courtenay; 'you must not ask me to go amongst any of your people; it makes me so very nervous, — it upsets me quite.'

"'I did not mean you to be worried about it, dear mamma,' said Gertrude; 'but you know so much about children, that perhaps, if Susan Philips came to the carriage-door, you could just tell her something that might be good for her baby.'

"Mrs. Courtenay hesitated, thought, and at last acquiesced. Prescribing for babies was the point on which she peculiarly piqued herself, and this Gertrude had lately discovered.

"'Well, then, it is settled, I suppose,' said Charlotte; 'and we will go to our gardening, Gertrude, and leave the others to their own devices.'

"'Only if you could spare me a little time to finish my work first,' said Gertrude, 'I should be very grateful.'

"Charlotte looked disappointed; and Jane, following the example set her of assisting others, offered to undertake the task. Gertrude was obliged, but not too much so. She did not appear to consider that Jane had made an unusual effort, which would have implied that she was generally selfish; and thanked her more for the favor conferred on herself than for the kindness done to the poor woman. And Edith looked on in surprise; that her mother should take any trouble for a sick child, and Jane

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

put herself out of the way to work for it, she would an hour before have considered perfectly unnatural. Now, both actions came as a matter of course, while Gertrude seemed to have cast aside her own duties, and to devote herself merely to a trifling amusement,— why, Edith, notwithstanding her late conversation, had yet to learn." — pp. 170 – 172.

With a warm imagination kindled into enthusiasm by strong religious feeling, Gertrude had formed a plan which to many might seem preposterous, did they not remember the ardent desire so often felt, especially in younger life, to do some great thing. Gertrude's ambition was to devote the fortune left to her by her aunt to the erection and endowment of a church ; but doubtful of herself, and fearing presumption in the idea, she dares not indulge her dream until she has consulted a friend to whom all look with confidence and respect. Mr. Dacre advises her to wait, and, before the time fixed by him as the period of her decision, the family circumstances become such that she sacrifices, not without a struggle, her cherished plan. But this self-denial would be comparatively worthless, without the constant light of love shed by her meek and quiet spirit on all around her. We may call her character perfect, so far as the word may be considered applicable to a human being ; but it is a perfection which it is good to contemplate.

There is very little that is lively in the book, if we except Charlotte's satirical observations, Laura's light-heartedness when we are first introduced to her, and Gertrude's consistent cheerfulness. It is not a novel to be read for amusement alone ; and yet those who have no other aim would not find it deficient in interest, while to those who are seeking for something better than pictures of depravity, and scenes of which the mere description seems to have a contaminating effect, such a book is a relief.

There are occasional glimpses of a quiet humor in the two earlier works, which we lose almost entirely in the later ones. The writer seems to have fallen into the error before referred to, of fearing too much any indication of a joyous spirit, and therefore almost uniformly shrouding her scenes in gloom. It is more to be regretted in this case, because we are sure that she would have succeeded in an attempt to make religion more attractive by its union with an innocent sprightliness. The want of this is especially felt in Margaret Percival,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where a painful sense of suffering presses upon the mind, unrelieved by those lighter touches which would only have rendered the book more religious by rendering it more cheerful.

Laneton Parsonage is more a book about children than Amy Herbert, and the story would be a good one, if the long conversations of Mr. Clifford, the clergyman of the village of Laneton, with his little girls on the doctrines of the English Church had been omitted. It would be unwise, we think, to give such discourses to any children, and certainly unreasonable to expect any children to read them. And if they listened and read, we cannot see that they would be the better for it; for such teachings, we imagine, can only confuse a young mind, and turn it from that simple and loving trust in God, that desire to do right, and fear of offending Him, which make a child's true religion. We extract a part of one of these conversations. The occasion of it was the death of an old fisherman, who had been lost in the bay during a thunderstorm. We think Ruth's question at the end the best comment upon the whole. Mr. Clifford had said, — "Roger Dyson was, I most truly think, a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and we may without presumption trust that his spirit is at rest." After answering some questions put to him by his children, Ruth and Madeline, he continues, —

"'Catholic, you know, is not the name of a place, — it means universal, that is, belonging to all countries and all ages.'

"'Then there are a great many built churches,' said Madeline.

"'Yes, but only one Catholic Church.'

"'I think I know what you mean, papa,' said Ruth; 'all the people who are baptized, and go to church.'

"'Those belong to the Catholic Church in England,' said Mr. Clifford; 'but the Catholic Church is also in America, and Scotland, and France, and Italy, and many other countries besides.'

"'That makes a great many,' said Ruth; 'they cannot all be one.'

"'Are you sure of that, Ruth? You have an uncle in America, and another in India, and another in Jamaica; do they not all belong to one family?'

"'Yes, I see, papa, but ——'

"'But what? do not be afraid to speak, my love.'

"'Are the churches in other countries quite like ours, papa? Do the people say just the same prayers, and have they books like ours?'

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"'Not exactly; but I dare say your uncles do not live exactly alike. It is impossible they should, indeed, yet that does not prevent them from belonging to one family. They may dress differently, and get up at different hours, and have a great many different habits, but they are still brothers, the children of one parent.'

"'And the churches in Scotland, and France, and America, and all the places you mentioned, are brothers,' said Ruth.

"'Sisters rather they are called, but I cannot explain the reason to you now.'

"'But,' said Ruth, and a shade of perplexity came over her face, 'it is not the same either; all the churches in different countries cannot have the same parent.'

"'They may be descended from the same,' replied Mr. Clifford; 'your cousins in America, for instance, belong to our family; but your uncle Edmond is their father, and I am yours; and the same with your cousins in India and Jamaica. There may be several different fathers, but all will have come from one person, that is, your grandfather.'

"'And the churches all over the world must have come from one,' said Ruth, still looking confused.

"'Yes, from our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Universal Church.'

"'But who are all the fathers?' asked Ruth, quickly.

"'The bishops are,' replied Mr. Clifford; 'they are called Right Reverend Fathers in God. You know the first bishops were the twelve apostles. Our Saviour gave to them a special gift of the Holy Ghost, and before their death they were directed to choose other persons to be bishops likewise, and to ordain them by laying their hands upon them and praying for the blessing of God. Our Lord then gave to these persons authority, such as apostles had, and so it has gone on down to the present day.'

"'Then the bishops are all like brothers,' said Madeline.

"'Yes, and they all have the same power given them by God to rule the Church and to make clergymen, like me and Mr. Monckton of Cottington.'

. . . . . .

"'Did a bishop make you a clergyman, papa?' asked Madeline.

"'Yes, no one else could do it. Our Saviour does not allow any persons to teach and administer the Holy Sacraments, except such as have been, what is called, ordained by a bishop.'

"'And that is the reason you were ordained,' said Ruth.

"'Yes; first of all, I was made a deacon, by having the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bishop's hands laid upon my head, after he had prayed for me. When this was done, I was allowed to perform the greater part of the service, but not the whole. I could not pronounce the absolution or forgiveness of sins, nor consecrate the bread and wine in the Holy Communion. When I had acted as deacon for two or three years, I was made a priest in the same way, by the authority of the bishop, and now I may perform the whole duty.'

"'Did old Roger understand about it all?' inquired Ruth.

"Mr. Clifford smiled. 'It is not very likely he did; yet he may have been more truly a Christian than you or I are. It is not knowing, but believing and doing, which will for our Saviour's sake gain us admittance into heaven.'"—pp. 186–189.

With the last sentence we quite agree, and wonder why it should then have been necessary to impress upon the minds of children any thing more than the duty of "believing and doing."

The character of Lady Catharine Hyde is one of those in which Miss Sewell excels, and it is this, as manifested in her conduct towards Alice Lennox, an orphan child whom she has adopted as her own, which gives a character to the book itself. Cold and sometimes even severe in manner, there is a depth of affection in her heart, and a noble principle in her life, which make us admire and almost love her, though we certainly should have stood as much in awe of her as did Mrs. Clifford.

In Margaret Percival there are many faults, both of plan and execution, and its perusal leaves upon the mind no such pleasing impression as we derive from Miss Sewell's former works. With many scenes of interest, with all the insight into character displayed in it, with occasional sentences which almost startle one by their truth to nature, and hints which deserve to be treasured up in the memory, it is still painfully unsatisfactory as a whole. The story is little more than an account of the contest between the claims of the Romish and the English church in Margaret's mind, and the consequent doubts and discussions. In the existing state of religion in England, we cannot wonder that a zealous member of the Establishment should find her own mind directed, and should desire to turn the minds of others, to the danger of a conversion to Romanism. But we doubt whether, in the present instance, the writer's zeal has been a zeal according to knowledge, for the book could have little

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

effect in guarding against the dreaded evil. Could we forget, as Margaret did, and as many others may do, what the religion of Rome has been and what it really is, we might be attracted by the manner in which it presents itself to her imagination and affections, first in the church of St. Ouen, and afterwards in the devotion and friendship of the Countess Novera; but this attraction certainly would not be overcome by any of the arguments or considerations adduced by our author.

It cannot be denied that the book is too long, that there is a want of cheerfulness in its scenes, that there are too many sorrowful events, and, above all, that Margaret's feelings are too much and too minutely dwelt upon. This is a fault not observable in Gertrude. We learned her character more by what she did and said, than by descriptions of what she felt. The personages of these tales are shown to more advantage by the representation of their words and actions, than by analyzing, and, as in Margaret's case, almost dissecting, the secret thoughts of the heart. The terrible spiritual experiences through which she passes are, we know, sometimes endured, but we can see little good in dwelling upon them. The book should have been called The Trials of Margaret Percival, for such an ordeal of outward and inward trouble leaves no room for thoughts of peace. We are not satisfied that a pure, candid, faithful, and religious mind should be made to suffer so intensely. As we have said before, these things have been, and will be again; but in real life, when such misery is made the means of sanctification, it is better that the heart alone should know its own bitterness, and we shrink from its representation even in fiction. Yet the book is a more ambitious one, and is written with more power than the others. We are made to love Margaret, and in the earlier part of the narrative we watch with interest the gradual development and improvement of her character, whence perhaps arises our disappointment and dissatisfaction that so many sorrows should have been heaped upon her.

The Countess Novera, Margaret's Romanist friend, lovely in person, superior in mind, and with her heart filled with a lofty enthusiasm, is made almost as captivating to us as to her; and when we contrast her pure and elevated spirit with the low-minded and worldly views which influenced almost every one with whom Margaret was connected, we feel that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her religion comes in for its share of attraction. We must admit, too, that Father Andrea, the Countess's confessor, is sometimes placed in a more interesting light than Margaret's uncle and counsellor, Mr. Sutherland, a clergyman of the English church. She is finally saved from her danger, and strengthened against the strong temptations to forsake "the church of her fathers," not by arguments drawn from the corruptions of Rome, or, as it seems to us, by any clear views of the comparative claims of the two churches between whose rights to her allegiance she is to decide; it is the fear of "the sin of schism" alone upon which her uncle principally dwells, and which most influences her. Descendants, as we are, of *incorrigible schismatics*, we must be unable to appreciate the force of this argument, and we close the book, almost with a fear lest it should fall into the hands of some unguarded person inclined to Romanism, to whom it might prove a bane rather than an antidote.

In reading these books, we find constant proofs of great discernment of character and motive. Where the writer most exerts herself, she can scarcely be surpassed in the remarkable individuality with which she clothes the actors in her scenes. Each character stands out by itself, and could never be mistaken for another. Her disagreeable or bad people do not all act from the same motive, or reach the same degree of folly or depravity; and her good ones are not all alike. Mr. Dacre, Lady Catharine Hyde, and Mr. Sutherland, all evidently favorites with the writer, are instances of this variety, though we think the last character not so well sustained as the two former. Most of the commonplace personages are like similar people in real life, uninteresting, except as they fill up the spaces that would otherwise be blank; but poor Miss Debrett, in Margaret Percival, shows what may be made even of such a character. We think that we have known more than one Miss Debrett, — women so really kind-hearted, that we blame ourselves for ever being annoyed by them, and quite thank Miss Sewell for giving us a new interest in them.

We have occasionally descriptions of natural objects and scenery; but in these the writer is much less successful than in her delineations of character. Her thunderstorms are rather too theatrical, and are introduced only for the sake of effect; fortunately, however, she has allowed herself but two

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of them. The following may be taken as a favorable specimen of her powers in this respect.

"There was little comfort, however, to be gained from the outward world, for dimness covered the distant country, and the trees in the park were still in comparative darkness. Only the white road gleamed in the twilight, and a thin column of smoke arose from one solitary cottage; while, far away in the east, a bright crimson streak was gradually extending itself, and dispersing the masses of gray clouds which had gathered to greet the rising sun. For a long time Gertrude remained at the window, watching till the crimson streak had spread into a broad belt, and the gray clouds had separated into light flakes; and then the glorious orb of fire stole upwards between the shadowy hills, marking their smooth outlines, and brightening their grassy slopes; while still, as it ascended, the mists floated from before it, and the radiant sky melted into a clear pale blue; and silently and swiftly the gladdening rays travelled onwards, till hill and valley, streamlet and tree, tall spires and clustering cottages, had felt their magic power, and started into life beneath their touch."— *Gertrude*, pp. 247, 248.

Except "the white road gleaming in the twilight," this is commonplace, and does not at all bring the scene before us.

It is the purity of taste and sentiment, mingled with religious earnestness, in these books, which constitutes their chief attraction. We are not led to suppose that manners are of no consequence; Colonel Herbert is rejoiced to find in Amy the promise of "a Christian lady," and Gertrude and Margaret are uniformly "lady-like." We are glad that Miss Sewell makes use of this word, for we hear it too seldom. It seems to be forgotten in our present schemes of education, and by many of those who consider their education "finished," that it is really worth while to be "a lady," not in the American, but in the true sense of the term, — a well-bred woman, courteous in demeanour and gentle in speech. That when such a person is really found, we speak of her as belonging to "the old school," shows too plainly what the new school is.

With all these merits, however, we fear that Miss Sewell has been so misled by her own principles and partialities, and perhaps by the advice of others, as to desire to adapt her works exclusively to the Church of England; for while her first two books are eminently Christian, with an un-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

avoidable tinge of her peculiar doctrines, of which no fair mind could complain, the later ones are evidently intended only to exemplify and uphold the claims of the Establishment. We are disappointed that her influence should be thus limited, and are convinced that this narrowing of the sphere will not increase the usefulness of her productions, and will probably cause her to fall into many of the mistakes and faults of ordinary writers of religious novels. We are curious to know what will be the character of her next work, but fear that she writes too fast, and are therefore not in haste for its announcement. Whenever it may come, we trust that it will be more like Gertrude than Margaret Percival.

ART. V. — *History of the Conquest of Peru, with a Preliminary View of the Civilization of the Incas.* By WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT, Corresponding Member of the French Institute, of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, etc. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1847. 2 vols. 8vo.

HARDLY nine years have passed since the publication of the History of Ferdinand and Isabella placed Mr. Prescott at once, by universal consent both in England and America, in the front rank of English historians. And what a golden account he has rendered of his labors during this brief period! Taking up the theme of Spanish discovery and conquest nearly where he had left it in his first work, passing by an easy transition from the story of Columbus to that of Cortés and the Pizarros, he has followed their track amid the virgin forests and gorgeous mountain scenery of the tropical regions of this continent, till he has reached the close of what may be called the heroic period of Spanish adventure in the settlement of America, and has left as little to be done by his successors as he had found accomplished by those who had preceded him in the enterprise. The subject of his last two histories, the conquest of Mexico and Peru, does not equal his earliest topic in splendor and variety, but is superior to it in freshness and abundance of romantic incident. It has the absorbing interest of a chivalrous legend or an

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oriental tale, while it lacks the dignity and complexity of the vast subjects treated by Gibbon and Hume. The picturesque style of the old chroniclers is better adapted to it than the thoughtful manner and sharp analysis of the philosophical historian. It could not have fallen into better hands, therefore; for Mr. Prescott's temperament is more that of a poet than a philosopher. Seldom and unwillingly does he interrupt the clear and brilliant flow of the narrative, or the imposing trains of vivid description, to moralize or speculate upon the succession of events, or upon the characters of the personages who were concerned in them. He has skilfully preserved the romantic coloring which the old Spanish story-tellers gave to the incidents and scenes they described, and which is the more glowing as many of them are led to speak of their personal adventures, or of what their own eyes had witnessed. In a critical sketch of one of the most remarkable of these narrators, Mr. Prescott has unconsciously delineated some of his own features as a historian.

"Garcilasso's work is the reflection of the age in which he lived. It is addressed to the imagination, more than to sober reason. We are dazzled by the gorgeous spectacle it perpetually exhibits, and delighted by the variety of amusing details and animated gossip sprinkled over its pages. The story of the action is perpetually varied by discussions on topics illustrating its progress, so as to break up the monotony of the narrative, and afford an agreeable relief to the reader. This is true of the First Part of his great work. In the Second there was no longer room for such discussion. But he has supplied the place by garrulous reminiscences, personal anecdotes, incidental adventures, and a host of trivial details, — trivial in the eyes of the pedant, — which historians have been too willing to discard, as below the dignity of history. We have the actors in this great drama in their private dress, become acquainted with their personal habits, listen to their familiar sayings, and, in short, gather up those minutiæ which in the aggregate make up so much of life, and not less of character.

"It is this confusion of the great and the little, thus artlessly blended together, that constitutes one of the charms of the old romantic chronicle, — not the less true that, in this respect, it approaches nearer to the usual tone of romance. It is in such writings that we may look to find the form and pressure of the age. The worm-eaten state-papers, official correspondence, public records, are all serviceable, indispensable, to history.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They are the framework on which it is to repose; the skeleton of facts which gives it its strength and proportions. But they are as worthless as the dry bones of the skeleton, unless clothed with the beautiful form and garb of humanity, and instinct with the spirit of the age. — Our debt is large to the antiquarian who with conscientious precision lays broad and deep the foundations of historic truth; and no less to the philosophic annalist who exhibits man in the dress of public life, — man in masquerade; but our gratitude must surely not be withheld from those who, like Garcilasso de la Vega, and many a romancer of the Middle Ages, have held up the mirror — distorted though it may somewhat be — to the interior of life, reflecting every object, the great and the mean, the beautiful and the deformed, with their natural prominence and their vivacity of coloring, to the eye of the spectator. As a work of art, such a production may be thought to be below criticism. But, although it defy the rules of art in its composition, it does not necessarily violate the principles of taste; for it conforms in its spirit to the spirit of the age in which it was written. And the critic, who coldly condemns it on the severe principles of art, will find a charm in its very simplicity, that will make him recur again and again to its pages, while more correct and classical compositions are laid aside and forgotten." — Vol. I., pp. 297, 298.

While the taste and imagination of our author dwell fondly upon the graphic sketches of this old chronicler, he is by no means insensible to the severer claims which the refined culture and skeptical spirit of these later times make upon the diligence and judgment of the historian. He has labored even more assiduously to preserve fidelity and truthfulness in the accounts, than to deck them in an attractive garb, or to preserve the tone and spirit of the age and country to which they belong. The materials which he collected were even embarrassing from their variety and copiousness; to select, compare, and reconcile authorities was the most difficult portion of his task, if we except, perhaps, the preliminary labor of hunting them up from the resting-places where most of them had slumbered for nearly three centuries. Many of the attendants and successors of the conquerors of Peru seem to have had an itch for collecting and writing; but their bulky narratives and reports were preserved mostly in manuscript, and guarded for a long time with true Spanish jealousy and watchfulness in the national archives. Slowly and reluctantly have the great doors of these prison-houses of information

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been opened, the piles of dusty and worm-eaten papers examined, the half-defaced writing deciphered, and still more slowly has the printer's art been allowed to rescue them from the manifold chances of mutilation and loss, and to render them accessible to the learned and curious in other countries. But little was done to make them known to the world till within the last thirty years; during this period, Muñoz, Navarrete, and other Spanish scholars, have accomplished much, and Mr. Prescott has richly profited by their labors.

Obliged to rely in the main upon manuscript authorities obtained from Europe, our author's researches in this way have been carried so far, and prosecuted with so generous an expenditure of time and money, as to leave very little to be gleaned by subsequent collectors. To the bibliographer and the antiquarian his lively accounts of the quantity and character of these materials, and his biographical and critical sketches of the authors of them, form a most entertaining and instructive portion of his work. By long practice and discipline, this labor of research and collation seems to have become as congenial to his taste as the comparatively easy task of composition. Continued study has rendered him so familiar with the peculiarities of the Spanish chroniclers, with the official reports and personal narratives of the agents in the conquest and settlement of central America, that he speaks of them with the fondness of friendship, and draws their characters with an evident bias of partiality, as if they were his intimate acquaintances. This predilection for his authorities, conceived by a writer of genial temperament and quick sympathies, has acted upon his style, and reproduced in it the vivacity and freshness of the contemporary observer and narrator. At the same time, his good taste has pruned their luxuriance and wordiness, and his sound judgment corrected the effects of their excited imaginations and almost unbounded credulity. He examines accounts with as much severity as if engaged in a legal investigation, while the results thus carefully arrived at are presented with the ardor of an advocate, and the animation of an interested witness.

Robertson is the only English historian of any note — in fact, the only writer in any language — who has preceded Prescott in the attempt to furnish a complete history, based upon the original authorities, of the conquest of Peru. A cheap compend, made to booksellers' order, of that portion

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his history of America which relates to Peru was written for Constable's Miscellany, some years ago, by a literary Spaniard who rejoiced in the sonorous name of Don Telesfaro de Trueba y Cosio. He was a mere hack writer, and his work has no attractions for one who has at command the volumes of the learned Scotch historiographer, from whom he borrowed all his materials. Robertson was a laborious and faithful, no less than an elegant historian. He wrote under great disadvantages, as the archives at Simancas were not open in his day, so that he was ignorant even of the existence of many valuable documents relating to his subject, and others, of which he had heard, were inaccessible to him. But he spared no pains or cost for obtaining those which could be had, and he was patient and conscientious in the use of his collections. As he was writing the history of the whole continent, his account of the conquest of Peru was necessarily brief, but it is able and trustworthy as far as it goes. Prescott's history is far more complete and satisfactory, and, as we have implied, it presents all that we can ever hope to know respecting the civilization of the Incas, and their subjugation by the Spaniards; but his narrative and statements seldom conflict with those of Robertson, and the impressions given by the two historians of the characters of the chief actors in the scenes described agree perfectly with each other. What the one left in outline the other has filled up and colored with splendor and artist-like effect; but the drawings in the two cases entirely correspond. The cautious Scotchman is perhaps a little more skeptical as to the entire fidelity of some of the wonderful stories that have been transmitted to us by the Spanish conquerors, while Mr. Prescott obviously leans to greater confidence in their veracity. But the accounts, as given by the original authorities, are repeated by both writers, and the reader can form his own judgment respecting the credibility of them.

Robertson shares to some extent the predilection of his countrymen for metaphysics, and everywhere shows himself a grave and thoughtful, if not a profound historian. He does not speculate widely or rashly, he does not indulge in the brilliant but delusive generalizations which have become so popular among the French, he has no comprehensive historical theories to defend; but to his meditative mind history is no barren record of facts, but a vast repository of examples

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enforcing moral lessons and illustrating general truths. Prescott is not so fond of reflection, and gives way more freely to the enthusiasm excited by wonderful adventures, striking exhibitions of character, and the novel and magnificent scenery which formed the theatre of Spanish exploit in the New World. The reader's intellect is left in the main to do its own work, and the events narrated suggest their own lessons, varying according to the original temperament and bias of the spectator. He has greater vivacity of style than his predecessor, and at least equal correctness and elegance; his narrative is more flowing and spirited, his descriptions more vivid and picturesque. He is not so much of a professed teacher, but a far more fascinating companion. Both excel in the clear arrangement of the matter, the skilful grouping of objects and incidents, and the distinct portraiture of character. Robertson's style is more measured, elaborate, and ornate; Prescott's more varied, sprightly, and idiomatic, and at least equally pure. The English critic, made jealous and sharp-sighted by national pride, labors in vain to detect Scotticisms in the one, or Americanisms in the other. Hume is more careless than either, but his manner has secret and inimitable graces, which throw later historians into despair.

Two of the chief authorities consulted by Mr. Prescott in his preliminary account of Peruvian civilization are Juan de Sarmiento and Polo de Ondegardo, whose writings still exist only in manuscript, and were not in the possession of Robertson, if indeed he was aware of their existence. The *Relaciones* of the latter, however, were in the hands of Herrera, who made free use of them in his history, on which Robertson placed great dependence, and thus profited by them at second hand. Both Sarmiento and Ondegardo have high claims to confidence, as they visited Peru during the lifetime of the Pizarros, travelled over the country, examined the works and institutions of the natives, collected their traditions, and presented their accounts in the form of official reports to the Spanish government. The former occupied a high post as President of the Council of the Indies, and his rank naturally adds weight to his testimony. Traditions of the early history of the Peruvians, of the origin of their arts and institutions, he seems to have derived from conversation with the Inca nobility; and these he repeats, according to Mr.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Prescott, with candor and faithfulness, but also with bountiful credulity. Superstitious, but not cruel or hard-hearted, he pitied the sufferings of the natives after the conquest, and reprobated with great severity the inhuman and rapacious conduct of the Spaniards. In his account of what he saw and heard for himself, our author gives him full credit for veracity, and follows him with full confidence in his description of the antiquities of the country, and the manners, social institutions, and religion of the natives.

Ondegardo was a Spanish jurist and magistrate, who had excellent opportunities for studying the laws and customs of the Peruvians, and was therefore consulted by the home government when further information was desired respecting the country and people that had been recently subjected to their rule. To a series of interrogatories addressed to him for this purpose he returned full and elaborate answers, which display a thorough knowledge of the condition, habits, and progress in civilization of the Incas. Mr. Prescott speaks with high respect of his sagacity and judgment, his freedom from superstition and credulity, the exact and business-like air of his reports, and his wise and humane suggestions respecting the policy to be adopted by the conquerors. The administration of the finances was the subject to which he gave most attention, and on this point his minute statements are entitled to the highest consideration.

The only other original authority of much note, whom our author has followed in his "Preliminary View," is the Inca Garcilasso de la Vega, whose father was a Spanish captain under the Pizarros, and his mother a Peruvian princess, niece of Huayna Capac, and granddaughter of one of the most celebrated of the native sovereigns. We have already copied Mr. Prescott's lively portraiture of his literary character. His great work, the *Commentarios Reales*, published during his lifetime, has long been the chief guide to those who were curious respecting the early history and antiquities of Peru, and Robertson was indebted to it for a most valuable portion of his materials.

"Garcilasso's mother was but ten years old at the time of her cousin Atahuallpa's accession, or rather usurpation, as it is called by the party of Cuzco. She had the good fortune to escape the massacre which, according to the chronicler, befell most of her kindred, and with her brother continued to reside in their ancient

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capital after the Conquest. Their conversations naturally turned to the good old times of the Inca rule, which, colored by their fond regrets, may be presumed to have lost nothing as seen through the magnifying medium of the past. The young Garcilasso listened greedily to the stories which recounted the magnificence and prowess of his royal ancestors, and though he made no use of them at the time, they sunk deep into his memory, to be treasured up for a future occasion. When he prepared, after the lapse of many years, in his retirement at Cordova, to compose the history of his country, he wrote to his old companions and schoolfellows, of the Inca family, to obtain fuller information than he could get in Spain on various matters of historical interest. He had witnessed in his youth the ancient ceremonies and usages of his countrymen, understood the science of their *quipus*, and mastered many of their primitive traditions. With the assistance he now obtained from his Peruvian kindred, he acquired a familiarity with the history of the great Inca race, and of their national institutions, to an extent that no person could have possessed, unless educated in the midst of them, speaking the same language, and with the same Indian blood flowing in his veins. Garcilasso, in short, was the representative of the conquered race; and we might expect to find the lights and shadows of the picture disposed under his pencil, so as to produce an effect very different from that which they had hitherto exhibited under the hands of the Conquerors." — Vol. I., p. 295.

Without carrying the list of original authorities any further, it is obvious that there is no lack of credible testimony at first hand respecting the condition and civilization, the arts and works, of the Peruvians, at the time when their country was first invaded by the Spaniards. Many independent witnesses confirm each other. Spanish grandiloquence and boastfulness may have colored the accounts to some extent, but any essential exaggerations or misstatements must have been exposed by internal discrepancies or conflicting external evidence. But this satisfactory character of the testimony must be strictly limited to the period of the Conquest. What was the previous condition of the natives, what was the antecedent history of their government, the origin of their civilization, what the causes of many peculiarities in their habits, laws, and religious and social institutions, are questions which it is impossible to answer with any precision or certainty. The only substitute for writing possessed by the natives was a very

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crude system of mnemonics, which was a help to the memory of an individual, but almost useless as a vehicle to transmit thought from mind to mind; it could not be called *writing*, therefore, except by an abuse of language. Rude, confused, and contradictory traditions were their only sources of knowledge respecting the past. Garcilasso and Sarmiento have collected and preserved many of these legends, but they cannot be reconciled with each other, and serve only to make darkness visible in the annals of Peru before the Spanish invasion. The history of the generation first discovered there by the Spaniards, and of their immediate predecessors, is all that can be known. It is mournful to be obliged to add, that the history ends as abruptly as it begins. In the subjugation of the country by the Pizarros terminates the history, not only of the empire and the civilization of the Peruvians, but of their distinct national existence. The race was not absolutely exterminated, but so feeble a remnant was left, and this reduced to a condition so servile and abject, that it ceased to be an object of notice for the historian.

The mild, tranquil, and unwarlike character of the natives accounts for the rapid success of the Spaniards, and the consequent speedy extinction of every trace of the government and religion of the Incas. The whole framework of their institutions perished and disappeared, as a ship founders at sea, leaving no trace of its existence upon the waters in which it has been engulfed. The civil polity of the Peruvians seems to have been admirably adapted to their national character. Their government was a theocracy, an absolute but paternal despotism, that watched over them from the cradle to the grave, guiding every action, and regulating their conduct in all the relations of life. The reigning monarch was at once their sovereign and their deity, and resistance to his mandate was an act both of rebellion and sacrilege. Disobedience or revolt consequently was never thought of, and the royal authority, finding no opposition to conquer, and no limits to overleap, naturally subsided into a gentle and patriarchal exercise of its functions, giving the people no cause to murmur, though they had nothing to hope. Where there is no sphere for ambition, and no field for contest, there is no occasion to be cruel, deceitful, or unjust. The people had no room for progress, and therefore could not regard it as possible; their station and employments were determined by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their birth, and they could neither seek to rise above them, nor fear the loss of fortune or rank. Domestic quiet was assured to them, and a certain subsistence for a fixed and moderate amount of labor; the country and every thing contained in it belonged to the Inca, their temporal and spiritual sovereign, and to him they left the entire management of it, without suspecting that they had a right to any voice in the matter. He divided the land among them, and assigned to each his due proportion of its products, the division being renewed once a year, so as to accommodate the amount of possessions to the varying number in a family; pauperism was not tolerated, and prodigality was impossible.

The Inca was virtually high-priest as well as king, and the sacredness of his person, maintained by the awful sanctions of religion, was kept before the eyes of the people by his presence and action at the most solemn of the religious festivals. Yet he commonly delegated his sacerdotal functions to one of his brothers or nearest kindred, who officiated on all minor religious occasions, and stood nominally at the head of the priesthood. The claims of the monarch to divine authority were further displayed in the imposing and rigid ceremonial of the court, the humiliating duties performed before him by the proudest of the nobility, and the consecration even of every article of his attire. The most noted and conspicuous article of the imperial insignia was the *borla*, a kind of crimson fringe that encircled his forehead, and a single thread of which given to the messenger or minister of his will, like the signet-ring of an Oriental sovereign, was the voucher of his mission, and a token that enforced instant obedience. Garments and utensils once used by the Inca could not afterwards be devoted to meaner purposes, but were laid aside or destroyed; and at his death, even the mansions that he had occupied were abandoned, his furniture and treasures were sealed up for ever against vulgar sight or touch, and the new sovereign provided for himself other palaces and new equipments of state.

The highest order of nobility in the empire consisted entirely of members of the royal family, as all who derived their descent from the Incas inherited a portion of their ancestors' glory and authority. As the same dynasty had certainly continued for many generations, and each monarch had many wives and children, these nobles became very numer-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ous, though their rank was transmitted only in the male line. They peopled the court of the prince, commanded his armies, and filled the highest offices in the state and among the priesthood. The chiefs of conquered nations and their descendants constituted another and inferior order of aristocracy. Their authority was usually local, confined to the administration of affairs among the vanquished tribes, and controlled by higher officers, who were chosen from the reigning family.

The origin of so singular a form of government, of the universally admitted possession of divine authority by the sovereign, and the transmission of a portion of it to all his relatives and descendants, is a curious problem, but one wholly incapable of solution. The Incas were certainly a distinct race, speaking a language of their own, and much superior in intellect and character to the common people. The engravings in Dr. Morton's work show that the facial angle of the Inca skull is much larger than that of the Peruvian. Though their number had become considerable, from the causes already mentioned, still it was not so great, in comparison with the whole body of the inhabitants, as to make it probable that they were originally an invading tribe who had established themselves in the land by their victories. They appeared like a clan which had expanded in the course of not many generations from a single family. A conquering nation, not aided by the vast superiority in arts and arms which enabled the Europeans to make their rapid conquests, ought to bear a higher proportion to the number of the vanquished. If a whole tribe had thus overrun the country, it is not likely that they would have falsely claimed descent from a common progenitor, and arrogated to themselves an inheritance of divine power. We cannot help thinking, then, that there was a nucleus of truth in the familiar tradition which ascribes the origin of the Inca race to a single pair, who earned divine honors for themselves and their descendants by the priceless benefits of a higher civilization, of which they were the founders. Mr. Prescott says that this tradition is only one of several that were current among the Indians, and that it is improbable even when stripped of its supernatural accompaniments. It does not seem so incredible, however, as the only other one that he mentions, and it has the merit of explaining the otherwise mysterious fact, that the Inca tribe were all related to each other, and were distinguished from the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

body of the people by a higher physical and mental organization. We copy our author's account of this legend.

"According to the tradition most familiar to the European scholar, the time was, when the ancient races of the continent were all plunged in deplorable barbarism; when they worshipped nearly every object in nature indiscriminately; made war their pastime, and feasted on the flesh of their slaughtered captives. The Sun, the great luminary and parent of mankind, taking compassion on their degraded condition, sent two of his children, Manco Capac and Mama Oello Huaco, to gather the natives into communities, and teach them the arts of civilized life. The celestial pair, brother and sister, husband and wife, advanced along the high plains in the neighbourhood of Lake Titicaca, to about the sixteenth degree south. They bore with them a golden wedge, and were directed to take up their residence on the spot where the sacred emblem should without effort sink into the ground. They proceeded accordingly but a short distance, as far as the valley of Cuzco, the spot indicated by the performance of the miracle, since there the wedge speedily sank into the earth and disappeared for ever. Here the children of the Sun established their residence, and soon entered upon their beneficent mission among the rude inhabitants of the country; Manco Capac teaching the men the arts of agriculture, and Mama Oello initiating her own sex in the mysteries of weaving and spinning. The simple people lent a willing ear to the messengers of Heaven, and, gathering together in considerable numbers, laid the foundations of the city of Cuzco. The same wise and benevolent maxims, which regulated the conduct of the first Incas, descended to their successors, and under their mild sceptre a community gradually extended itself along the broad surface of the table-land, which asserted its superiority over the surrounding tribes." — Vol. I., pp. 8 – 10.

Omit the incident of the wedge, and the parentage of the Sun, and there is nothing very improbable in this beautiful legend, though it only pushes the difficulty one step farther back, as the question remains, Whence came this extraordinary couple, and how did they obtain the knowledge which they imparted to the Peruvians?

The religion founded by Manco Capac was certainly the purest form of belief and worship that existed among the several native tribes of this continent at the time when it was first visited by Europeans. The Peruvians believed in one Supreme Being, but they worshipped a crowd of inferior

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deities, among which were conspicuous the heavenly bodies, and especially the Sun, whom they revered as their especial protector, or national god. The Moon was worshipped as his sister-wife, the stars as a part of her celestial train, and Venus, surnamed "the youth with the long and curling locks," as the page, the morning and evening attendant, of the Sun. On the grand temple of the Sun at Cuzco the wealth of successive Incas had been lavished without stint, till it had become a treasure-house blazing with gold and silver and precious stones. The old Spanish chroniclers cannot find words to express their admiration of its splendor, though before they saw it the hapless Atahuallpa had caused it to be spoiled of much of its wealth, in his attempt to ransom his life from the inexorable and faithless Pizarro. Other sacred edifices, some almost rivalling the magnificence of the metropolitan temple, were scattered over the provinces, and the ministrations in them performed by an army of priests. The Virgins of the Sun were a numerous class, doomed to perpetual celibacy and seclusion from the world, who spent their lives in great nunneries attached to the temples, occupied in weaving hangings for the sacred buildings and apparel for the Incas, and in tending the sacred flame, which was kindled but once a year, on the feast of Raymi. Each month had its appropriate festivals, but the four principal ones of the year marked the arrival of the Sun at the solstices and equinoxes. Sacrifices were then offered, and sometimes, though rarely, a child or a beautiful virgin was made a victim; but the service was never polluted, as among the Mexicans, by a cannibal feast. Libations were poured out, and offerings made of animals, fruits, and flowers. The Inca, presiding at the royal table, distributed bread and fermented liquor to his nobles, and the entertainment ended with music and dancing. The deity and the mode of worship were alike appropriate for an agricultural people.

As tillers of the ground, indeed, the Peruvians appear to great advantage, their success in this respect greatly surpassing that of the Mexicans and every other native tribe of the continent. The yearly distribution of land among them, each one receiving his share, encouraged the practice of husbandry, and the laborer was further stimulated in his work by the example of all the great officers of state, and even of the Inca himself. Once a year, like the emperor of China,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sovereign went out to the fields, attended by a great concourse of the nobles and common people, and with his own hands guided a golden plough through its furrow. Nor did his patronage of the farmer's art stop here, but the resources of government were liberally applied to great public works for the improvement and irrigation of the soil. Vast canals and subterranean aqueducts conveyed water, in some cases to a distance of five hundred miles, to moisten ground that was seldom blessed by rain. In immense granaries the excess of one harvest was stored to make up for the possible deficiency of the next. Where nature had scarped the mountain-side, the natives cut the declivity into terraces, facing them with walls if the earth was loose, or transporting soil to the spot which was formely a barren rock. They made skilful use of manure, and anticipated by three centuries the scientific agriculturists of Europe in availing themselves of the valuable properties of *guano*. As the immense slope of the Cordilleras afforded every variety of climate, they were able to raise various products each in its appropriate locality, and thus to turn the ground into a continuous garden, from the burning level of the ocean up to the limit of perpetual snow. Immense herds of llamas, a domesticated animal that united the useful qualities of the sheep and the camel, were pastured along the steeps of the Andes, and employed as beasts of burden, while their fleeces were spun and woven into garments. Wool was obtained, also, from two species of wild animals, which roamed over heights inaccessible to man.

Other mechanic arts, besides spinning and weaving, were carried by the Peruvians to considerable perfection. Vases and ornaments of gold and silver, domestic utensils of clay and copper, polished stone mirrors and graven gems, showed remarkable skill in workmanship and some taste in design. They were ignorant of the use of iron, though nature had stored vast quantities of it in their soil; but they made chisels of stone, or more frequently of copper, which they had the secret of hardening, according to Humboldt, by combining with it a little tin. They worked mines, not by sinking shafts to any great depth, but by opening horizontal veins near the surface, which afforded a considerable supply; and they smelted the ore in furnaces, not having learned the use of quicksilver in forming amalgams. In architecture they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had made no great progress, though they erected buildings of vast size, simple and massive in construction, with little ornament. Stones were finely hewn for the walls, and nicely fitted to each other; but they were unacquainted with the principle of the arch, they tied the timbers together instead of mortising them, light was admitted only by the doorways, and the roofs were simply covered with thatch. The great military roads are the most remarkable monuments of Peruvian industry, rivalling, in their gigantic conception and the amount of toil which they required, the pyramids of Egypt, and far more honorable to their makers, as answering a useful purpose, and contributing effectually to the progress of civilization. We borrow Mr. Prescott's account of one of the two great thoroughfares of Peru.

"One of these roads passed over the grand plateau, and the other along the lowlands on the borders of the ocean. The former was much the more difficult achievement, from the character of the country. It was conducted over pathless sierras buried in snow; galleries were cut for leagues through the living rock; rivers were crossed by means of bridges that swung suspended in the air; precipices were scaled by stairways hewn out of the native bed; ravines of hideous depth were filled up with solid masonry; in short, all the difficulties that beset a wild and mountainous region, and which might appall the most courageous engineer of modern times, were encountered and successfully overcome. The length of the road, of which scattered fragments only remain, is variously estimated, from fifteen hundred to two thousand miles; and stone pillars, in the manner of European milestones, were erected at stated intervals of somewhat more than a league, all along the route. Its breadth scarcely exceeded twenty feet. It was built of heavy flags of freestone, and in some parts, at least, covered with a bituminous cement, which time has made harder than the stone itself. In some places, where the ravines had been filled up with masonry, the mountain torrents, wearing on it for ages, have gradually eaten a way through the base, and left the superincumbent mass — such is the cohesion of the materials — still spanning the valley like an arch!

"Over some of the boldest streams it was necessary to construct suspension bridges, as they are termed, made of the tough fibres of the maguey, or of the osier of the country, which has an extraordinary degree of tenacity and strength. These osiers were woven into cables of the thickness of a man's body. The huge ropes, then stretched across the water, were conducted

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through rings or holes cut in immense buttresses of stone raised on the opposite banks of the river, and there secured to heavy pieces of timber. Several of these enormous cables, bound together, formed a bridge, which, covered with planks, well secured and defended by a railing of the same osier materials on the sides, afforded a safe passage for the traveller. The length of this aërial bridge, sometimes exceeding two hundred feet, caused it, confined, as it was, only at the extremities, to dip with an alarming inclination towards the centre, while the motion given to it by the passenger occasioned an oscillation still more frightful, as his eye wandered over the dark abyss of waters that foamed and tumbled many a fathom beneath. Yet these light and fragile fabrics were crossed without fear by the Peruvians, and are still retained by the Spaniards over those streams which, from the depth or impetuosity of the current, would seem impracticable for the usual modes of conveyance. The wider and more tranquil waters were crossed on *balsas* — a kind of raft still much used by the natives — to which sails were attached, furnishing the only instance of this higher kind of navigation among the American Indians." — Vol. I., pp. 63 – 65.

A general view of the condition of the Peruvians under their native sovereigns forms on the whole an agreeable picture for the philanthropist. There was little suffering and little crime among them; the government, though despotic, was mild and paternal, the people were satisfied with their lot, the arts were sufficiently advanced for the most essential purposes of domestic comfort, and intellectual cultivation was not neglected. Indolence was their easily besetting sin, for the want of property in the soil, the rigorous and minute supervision of the government, and the virtual institution of castes among them stifled every motive to exertion, and almost annihilated their free agency, the highest attribute of man. If Europeans had never come in contact with them, it is probable that their civilization would have remained nearly stationary, like that of the Chinese, whom they resembled in many points of character and situation, and like whom, also, they must soon have begun to suffer from the many evils caused by a redundancy of population. They were rescued from this fate, indeed, yet only by the occurrence of a more awful calamity, — the Spanish invasion, which demolished the entire fabric of their empire, almost with the suddenness of an earthquake, and nearly buried their whole nation in the ruins. A few survived only to test nature's extreme power of enduring destitution and servitude.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Spanish adventurer in America in the sixteenth century was a singular compound of the bigot, the pirate, and the knight-errant. He was fierce, rapacious, and cruel; his conduct towards the natives was restrained by no sense of honor, no touch of compassion, no regard for the laws of God or man. A demon let loose from hell to wreak his spite and vengeance upon the sons of men could hardly have matched him in savageness, perfidy, and debauchery, and would have appeared even less odious, because incapable of his rapacity and fanaticism. A thirst for gold can work wonders, but it certainly never accomplished a greater miracle than in throwing the vices of this monster somewhat into the shade by mingling with them some of the most attractive qualities of chivalry; by imparting to him a reckless bravery, an invincible fortitude, and an untamable thirst for enterprise and distinction. The religion he professed, a wicked perversion of the name and spirit of Christianity, was hardly more dignified, or at all less hateful, than most forms of paganism; for it added the fervors of bigotry to the practice of crimes so monstrous, that the natural spirit and uninstructed conscience of man would have shrunk from them with loathing and horror. To say that he was sincere in his belief does not palliate the enormity of his offences against the law of justice and humanity, or give him any advantage over the untutored Indian whom he persecuted so remorselessly. And we have no confidence in the sincerity of his professions of zeal for the advancement of the faith, and the conversion of the heathen. This motive alone would never have led him to encounter danger and hardship with so firm a mind, to brave the perils of the unexplored sea and wilderness with so much daring and constancy, as to throw into the shade all the achievements of the heroes of older time. It was the accursed thirst for gold, acting on an excitable temperament, a lawless will, and a fervid imagination, which sustained him in his almost superhuman exertions; and in this point of view, of course, he sinks to a level with the swindler and the picaroon.

The magnitude of the evil accomplished by him was unhappily in full proportion to the atrocity of his intentions and character. Never had crime a broader or more magnificent theatre on which to act than in the conquest and subsequent desolation of the happy kingdoms of Mexico and Peru, and the subjection of millions of a simple and inoffensive people

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the lust and wickedness of a few European adventurers. Seldom had robbery and murder been practised before on so grand a scale, even in the progress of Roman arms, or in the invasion of the Northern hordes which avenged the cause of outraged humanity on the descendants and successors of those who had fought under Cæsar and Agricola. The pitiable condition, down to the present day, of those portions of America which were ravaged and colonized by the followers of Cortés and Pizarro, the frightful picture which their annals present of ceaseless anarchy and bloodshed, poverty, pestilence, and crime, seems but a fit though terrible retribution for the deeds of their ancestors. And under the iron heel of the invader they are even now expiating the long arrears of guilt. It seems hardly too fanciful to say, that the siege of Mexico by Cortés has found its parallel and its punishment in the terrific bombardment of Vera Cruz.

We have used strong language to characterize the proceedings of the Spanish conquerors, because it seems to us that Mr. Prescott's imagination has been somewhat carried away by the romantic nature of their exploits, the grandeur of the scene on which they acted and of the results which they accomplished, the thrilling story of their expeditions through the wilderness and along the frightful passes of the Andes, and above all by their knightly appearance and language, their chivalrous daring, fortitude, and prodigality, so that he appears at times forgetful of the baseness of their motives and the moral atrocity of their acts. We do not say by any means that he labors to excuse or palliate them; on the contrary, the moral tone of his work is elevated and pure, and when he stops to consider their conduct at all in its ethical aspect, he invariably stamps it with the reprobation it deserves. Still, he follows with so much enthusiasm the wonderful story of their achievements, and depicts in such glowing colors their noble bearing and prowess, that the general effect is like that of a record of knight-errantry; his heart is stirred within him, as at the sound of a trumpet, by the recital of their deeds; and the consequence is, that the reader is hurried along with him, and cheated into admiration of a pack of robbers and murderers. A grave reflection comes at last, which shows their character in its true light; but it is not fraught with the full sternness of moral indignation, and the reader gladly escapes from it, and indulges in the pleasing delusion again. There

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is some incongruity between the tone of the narrative, and the impartial moral estimate which follows it; the brilliancy of the one leads us to disregard or forget the severe lesson taught by the other. It is the highest compliment to Mr. Prescott's powers of narration and description to say that he has this power of enchaining the reader's attention and judgment, and forcing him to look at persons and events from his own favorite point of view. But history is recreant to its highest duty, when it fails to gibbet the name and memory of the cruel and perfidious, though splendid, conqueror. It was too great an honor for Pizarro and his followers, that their deeds should have been commemorated with so much zeal and eloquence as have here been lavished upon them.

Francis Pizarro, the chief agent in the discovery and conquest of Peru, was an adventurer originally of the lowest stamp, baseborn and illiterate, but of great energy, daring, and firmness, the very man to lead a marauding expedition through scenes of frightful peril and suffering to ultimate success. He was wily and unscrupulous, and showed as little fairness in his conduct towards his associates as in his treatment of the hapless Peruvians. He owed no favors to fortune, except that his lot was cast in a country and age which opened a broad field for enterprise and bravery, and made the attainment of the highest prizes in life possible to the humblest soldier. His father was a Spanish colonel, who had earned some renown in the wars, and, bringing to his home the licentious morals of the camp, had indulged his passions there in the lowest amours, and left his illegitimate offspring either to perish or to grow up as a foundling and an outcast. The founder of Rome had a more noble foster-mother than the conqueror of Peru, who, according to popular report, was suckled by one of a herd of swine. The story is not a probable one, and may have arisen from the fact that his earliest occupation was that of a swineherd. From this degrading employment he contrived to escape, and to join a band of adventurers, who were bent upon seeking their fortunes in the world beyond the waters, where riches and fame were said to await the boldest aspirant. In Hispaniola his courage and talents first attracted notice, and gained for him the favor of Ojeda, who made him his lieutenant in command of the settlement he had established in Terra Firma. After the disastrous issue of this attempt at coloniza-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, Pizarro became one of the followers of Balboa, and shared with this cavalier the glory of discovering the Pacific. He remained in the colony afterwards established on the Isthmus, and was often employed by its governor on military expeditions, which were more productive of hardship than of either glory or gold. Discontented with the meagre results of such enterprises, he looked with longing to the unexplored country which extended far to the southward of Panamá, in the hope of finding a theatre there for achievements as splendid as those of Cortés in Mexico. His own means were insufficient to fit out a voyage of discovery; but he found associates who would listen to his schemes, and share the perils and cost of the undertaking. These were Diego de Almagro, a soldier of fortune like himself, and Hernando de Luque, an ecclesiastic, who appears, however, to have been a mere agent in the application of funds intrusted to him by the wealthy Licentiate Espinosa.

The expedition set on foot by these three persons was a mere private affair, coldly sanctioned by the governor, and having little more pretence of public utility than an ordinary voyage for the purposes of commerce. In a small vessel, with about one hundred men, Pizarro sailed from Panamá in the autumn of 1524, and steered to the south, keeping near the coast, on which he hoped to find indications of some El Dorado existing in the interior. Toilsome and perilous was the voyage; the winds were contrary, their frail bark was battered by the tempests, and their scanty stores being soon exhausted, they were threatened with the extremities of famine. The land appeared as unfriendly to them as the ocean, for thick forests and dismal morasses skirted the shore, and the natives whom they encountered were fierce and warlike, besides being so poor that a victory over them was nothing worth. At last, Pizarro was obliged to land at a place afterwards appropriately called the Port of Famine, and establish himself there with half his company, while the others went back in the vessel to the Isle of Pearls, to obtain a supply of food. Six weeks did the unhappy leader with his followers remain at this wretched spot, worn by hunger and exposure, and having but faint hopes that their comrades would ever return to their rescue. From the Indians in the vicinity Pizarro obtained a little grain, some few trinkets of gold, and the report that an opulent kingdom lay farther

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

south, the monarch of which was even then at war with a still more powerful neighbour who had invaded his dominions. This was quite enough to encourage a sanguine man to persevere; and when his vessel at length came back with provisions, though twenty of his followers had already perished, Pizarro went aboard with the remainder, and again sailed for the south.

But the continuation of the voyage only added to the list of disasters. Having advanced but a few leagues along the coast, the Spaniards landed again to explore the interior, and discovered an Indian town of considerable size, which had been abandoned at their approach, so that they robbed the houses of some provision and a little gold without hindrance. But the fierce savages would not abandon their property without a struggle. Collecting a large party, they made a desperate onslaught upon the invaders, which was repelled with great difficulty, as Pizarro's men on this voyage were not provided with firearms. Five of their number were killed, and many wounded, among whom was their leader. Disheartened by this loss, and their crazy bark being now in great need of repairs, they decided to return to Panamá, hoping that enough had been done to persuade the governor to fit out another expedition. They arrived safely, and were soon joined by Almagro, who, in a smaller vessel, had followed in Pizarro's track, fought with the natives, and obtained more gold, without being lucky enough to meet his confederate on the voyage. They had added but little to the southern limit of Spanish discovery, their exploration of the coast having terminated at a point far to the north of the opulent kingdom of Peru. Instead of creeping timidly along the shore, if they had boldly stood out to sea, with the intention of making the land again only after they had passed the equator, the voyage would have produced far more brilliant results with less suffering and disaster.

As it was, the adventurers had but a cold reception at Panamá, and only with great difficulty were they able to obtain men and funds for a second attempt. After much delay they succeeded in raising a still smaller force than had accompanied them at first, but a better supply of military stores; and the two captains, now equal in command, sailed each in his own vessel for the southern land of promise, their priestly confederate still remaining at home to provide additional sup-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plies. The story of this second and memorable expedition, which resulted in the discovery of Peru, is told by Mr. Prescott with great animation and distinctness. It was the most honorable portion of Pizarro's career, for he encountered every kind of discouragement, hardship, and peril with unbroken firmness, and triumphed over them all, — shedding but little blood, for indeed he was too weak to be the aggressor, ever placing himself in the front rank of danger, adhering to his strong purpose with invincible fortitude when, out of his whole company, but thirteen men could be found bold enough still to cling to his desperate fortunes, and pointing out at last to the enraptured eyes of his associates the fair shores of that rich country of which they had been so long in search, a land teeming with population, and showing a profusion of the precious metals which their most sanguine dreams had never equalled. Before attaining this consummation of their hopes, the vessels were obliged repeatedly to go back to Panamá for supplies, the heroic leader remaining each time on shore with a portion of his forces, as if to hold possession of every inch of ground which they had gained to the southward, exploring the unbroken forests and swamps, and enduring the extremities of fatigue, hunger, and suspense, till the welcome sails should again appear in the horizon. We borrow Mr. Prescott's striking sketch of their situation when thus left to themselves in the wilderness.

"On the departure of his vessels, Pizarro marched into the interior, in the hope of finding the pleasant champaign country which had been promised him by the natives. But at every step the forests seemed to grow denser and darker, and the trees towered to a height such as he had never seen, even in these fruitful regions, where Nature works on so gigantic a scale. Hill continued to rise above hill, as he advanced, rolling onward, as it were, by successive waves to join that colossal barrier of the Andes, whose frosty sides, far away above the clouds, spread out like a curtain of burnished silver, that seemed to connect the heavens with the earth.

"On crossing these woody eminences, the forlorn adventurers would plunge into ravines of frightful depth, where the exhalations of a humid soil steamed up amidst the incense of sweet-scented flowers, which shone through the deep glooms in every conceivable variety of color. Birds, especially of the parrot tribe, mocked this fantastic variety of nature with tints as brilliant as those of the vegetable world. Monkeys chattered in crowds

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

above their heads, and made grimaces like the fiendish spirits of these solitudes; while hideous reptiles, engendered in the slimy depths of the pools, gathered round the footsteps of the wanderers. Here was seen the gigantic boa, coiling his unwieldy folds about the trees, so as hardly to be distinguished from their trunks, till he was ready to dart upon his prey; and alligators lay basking on the borders of the streams, or, gliding under the waters, seized their incautious victim before he was aware of their approach. Many of the Spaniards perished miserably in this way, and others were waylaid by the natives, who kept a jealous eye on their movements, and availed themselves of every opportunity to take them at advantage. Fourteen of Pizarro's men were cut off at once in a canoe which had stranded on the bank of a stream.

"Famine came in addition to other troubles, and it was with difficulty that they found the means of sustaining life on the scanty fare of the forest, — occasionally the potato, as it grew with cultivation, or the wild cocoa-nut, or, on the shore, the salt and bitter fruit of the mangrove; though the shore was less tolerable than the forest, from the swarms of mosquitos which compelled the wretched adventurers to bury their bodies up to their very faces in the sand. In this extremity of suffering, they thought only of return; and all schemes of avarice and ambition — except with Pizarro and a few dauntless spirits — were exchanged for the one craving desire to return to Panamá." — Vol. I., pp. 247–249.

Still more frightful were their sufferings on the little isles of Gallo and Gorgona, where Pizarro was left for a time with but thirteen followers, under circumstances that might well have caused the boldest to despair. Rescued at last by one small vessel with a scanty crew, instead of turning his prow northward, he boldly prosecuted his voyage over those unknown and perilous seas, and dropped anchor at last in a haven of the golden empire of the Incas. The place was Tumbez, lying at the bottom of a beautiful bay of the same name, protected in part by the island of Santa Clara. The following is a description of the town as it appeared to the Spaniards, or rather to two of their number, whom they sent ashore to obtain information.

"On the day [after their arrival], the Spanish captain sent one of his own men, named Alonso de Molina, on shore, accompanied by a negro who had come in the vessel from Panamá, together with a present for the curaca [a Peruvian chief] of some swine

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and poultry, neither of which were indigenous to the New World. Towards evening his emissary returned with a fresh supply of fruits and vegetables, that the friendly people sent to the vessel. Molina had a wondrous tale to tell. On landing, he was surrounded by the natives, who expressed the greatest astonishment at his dress, his fair complexion, and his long beard. The women, especially, manifested great curiosity in respect to him, and Molina seemed to be entirely won by their charms and captivating manners. He probably intimated his satisfaction by his demeanour, since they urged him to stay among them, promising in that case to provide him with a beautiful wife.

"Their surprise was equally great at the complexion of his sable companion. They could not believe it was natural, and tried to rub off the imaginary dye with their hands. As the African bore all this with characteristic good-humor, displaying at the same time his rows of ivory teeth, they were prodigiously delighted. The animals were no less above their comprehension; and, when the cock crew, the simple people clapped their hands, and inquired what he was saying. Their intellects were so bewildered by sights so novel, that they seemed incapable of distinguishing between man and brute.

"Molina was then escorted to the residence of the curaca, whom he found living in much state, with porters stationed at his doors, and with a quantity of gold and silver vessels, from which he was served. He was then taken to different parts of the Indian city, saw a fortress built of rough stone, and, though low, spreading over a large extent of ground. Near this was a temple; and the Spaniard's description of its decorations, blazing with gold and silver, seemed so extravagant, that Pizarro, distrusting his whole account, resolved to send a more discreet and trustworthy emissary on the following day.

"The person selected was Pedro de Candia, the Greek cavalier mentioned as one of the first who intimated his intention to share the fortunes of his commander. He was sent on shore, dressed in complete mail as became a good knight, with his sword by his side, and his arquebuse on his shoulder. The Indians were even more dazzled by his appearance than by Molina's, as the sun fell brightly on his polished armour, and glanced from his military weapons. They had heard much of the formidable arquebuse from their townsmen who had come in the vessel, and they besought Candia 'to let it speak to them.' He accordingly set up a wooden board as a target, and, taking deliberate aim, fired off the musket. The flash of the powder and the startling report of the piece, as the board, struck by the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ball, was shivered into splinters, filled the natives with dismay. Some fell on the ground, covering their faces with their hands, and others approached the cavalier with feelings of awe, which were gradually dispelled by the assurance they received from the smiling expression of his countenance.

"They then showed him the same hospitable attentions which they had paid to Molina; and his description of the marvels of the place, on his return, fell nothing short of his predecessor's. The fortress, which was surrounded by a triple row of wall, was strongly garrisoned. The temple he described as literally tapestried with plates of gold and silver. Adjoining this structure was a sort of convent appropriated to the Inca's destined brides, who manifested great curiosity to see him. Whether this was gratified is not clear; but Candia described the gardens of the convent, which he entered, as glowing with imitations of fruits and vegetables all in pure gold and silver! He had seen a number of artisans at work, whose sole business seemed to be to furnish these gorgeous decorations for the religious houses.

"The reports of the cavalier may have been somewhat overcolored. It was natural that men coming from the dreary wilderness, in which they had been buried the last six months, should have been vividly impressed by the tokens of civilization which met them on the Peruvian coast. But Tumbez was a favorite city of the Peruvian princes. It was the most important place on the northern borders of the empire, contiguous to the recent acquisition of Quito." — Vol. I., pp. 275 – 279.

With his present insignificant force, Pizarro could not attempt to conquer the country, or even to establish a Spanish colony in it; he therefore wisely avoided hostilities with the natives, and resolved to carry back to Panamá the news of the discovery, in the hope that the brilliant tidings would enable him to get together an armament strong enough to annex the whole Peruvian empire to the dominions of the king of Spain. Accordingly, after he had explored the coast for some distance to the southward of Tumbez, and found still more striking proof of the opulence of the people, he left two or three of his companions among them to acquire a knowledge of their language, took on board an equal number of Peruvians to be instructed in Castilian, and then returned to Panamá, from which he had been absent a year and a half. But the governor of that place still refused to aid the three associates in their great undertaking, alleging that the colony was not strong enough to invade so mighty

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an empire. The confederates resolved, therefore, that Pizarro himself should proceed directly to Spain and lay the matter before the sovereign, as an enterprise so important might well demand the patronage of government. This scheme was carried into effect, and the fine person, insinuating address, and natural eloquence of Pizarro, notwithstanding the deficiencies of his education, made so favorable an impression upon Charles, that ample authority was given him for the conquest of Peru, and he was appointed its Governor, Captain-General, and Adelantado, with fitting emoluments. These grants, it is true, cost the court nothing, and the adventurers were left to raise the necessary armament, and defray its cost, from their own resources. Pizarro showed his wily and perfidious character by the manner in which he treated his associate Almagro, for whom he had promised to obtain a post second in authority and importance only to his own; but he secured for him merely the comparatively insignificant place of governor of the fortress of Tumbez. This breach of contract was the beginning of a dissension between them which afterwards produced bitter fruits for both.

The bargain with the government being completed, Pizarro proceeded to his native province of Estremadura, to beat up for volunteers in the expedition, as he had covenanted to raise two hundred and fifty men for this purpose. Among the first to join him were his three brothers, Hernando, Juan, and Gonzalo, the two latter illegitimate like himself, and a relative by the mother's side, Francisco de Alcántara. Hernando Pizarro was a true Spanish cavalier, haughty, jealous, and implacable in resentment, but of a noble presence, high courage, and fine abilities. His youngest brother, Gonzalo, was more frank and generous, expert in all martial exercises, daring even to temerity, but deficient in sagacity and prudence. Both of these were afterwards to play an important part in history; the remaining brother, Juan, as brave as either, more courteous, and less cruel, was prematurely cut off before the subjugation of Peru was completed. They formed a remarkable family, distinguished as much by their prowess and grand achievements, as by their unhappy end. The chief agents in a wicked invasion, and in the numberless miseries inflicted upon the hapless Peruvians, the crimes of three of them were expiated by a premature and bloody death. Francis, the greatest of them all, died by the hands

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his own rebellious countrymen, provoked by his murder of his ancient comrade, Almagro; Gonzalo met the fate of a rebel under the sword of the executioner; Juan, really the most fortunate, was killed by the Indians at the siege of Cuzco; Hernando alone returned to his native land, but it was only to languish there for twenty years in a prison, and then to die in obscurity and neglect. The stern demands of natural justice were answered, for no one would be emulous of their high renown and splendid fortunes, if these were to be achieved only by the commission of such dark crimes, and to be followed by so terrible a punishment.

Leading back to Panamá a force somewhat smaller than he had agreed to furnish, Pizarro was met there by fresh difficulties. Almagro, incensed at his breach of faith, threatened to set on foot a rival expedition, but gave up his resentment at last, induced by fresh promises made only to be broken. The colonists had suffered too much in the former voyages to be at all disposed to embark on a new one, though a few of the old troop consented to follow a leader so well approved for courage and conduct. Having at length collected one hundred and eighty men, tolerably well armed and equipped, with twenty-seven horses for the cavalry, Pizarro embarked them in three vessels, and in January, 1531, sailed on his last expedition, leaving Almagro behind, as usual, to collect reinforcements. Considering the numbers of the Peruvians, and reckoning their strength only as commensurate with the degree of civilization they had attained, to invade their country with so small a force might well appear a desperate enterprise. But circumstances favored the invaders; the empire of the Incas was now involved in a civil war, consequent on a disputed succession to the throne. The mild and unwarlike character of the people, also, of which the Spaniards had seen full evidence on the former visit to their coast, together with the recent splendid success of Cortés in Mexico, greatly emboldened the assailants.

The indolent and peaceable disposition of the Peruvians was fostered by their peculiar social institutions, which tended to make them quiet and happy subjects, but stifled all ambition, repressed the development of military ardor and skill, and rendered them nearly indifferent to a change of masters. Having no absolute ownership of the soil, which was divided anew among them at short intervals, and sure that their wants

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would be provided for by the paternal care of the state, there was no encouragement for the accumulation of private wealth; having little or no property, they had nothing to fight for, and were ready tamely to submit to the first invader. The existence of the Inca clan among them as a distinct race and a higher caste, constituting an order of nobility to which the common people could not rise, and monopolizing offices and dignities by an undisputed title, left no field for preferment, and chilled all energy and spirit among the multitude. The vast amount of gold and silver, which the Spaniards robbed them of, belonged for the most part not to individuals, but to the state and the church, which in fact were one, and they consequently saw it change hands with hardly a murmur; and when the *prestige* of the Inca's divine power was broken by his misfortunes, his captivity and death, the natives, now regarding the Spaniards as the superior race commissioned by Heaven to rule over them, would scarcely have objected to installing Pizarro in his place, and admitting his comrades to the dignity and privileges of their former nobility. They allowed their country to be overrun with hardly the shadow of resistance; and had not the rapacity, lust, and cruelty of the invaders at last goaded them into frantic rebellion, Pizarro might have triumphed without bloodshed, and almost without an effort. The empire of the Incas, vast, opulent, and imposing in appearance, was a frail house of cards, that toppled down in a moment under the slightest blow.

Landing about one degree to the north of Tumbez, the Spaniards marched through the country towards that place, plundering and murdering as they went without provocation or excuse. The natives abandoned the city at their approach, and almost the only resistance they encountered was from the islanders of Puná, who were at war with the people on the mainland, and who had been provoked by the murder in cold blood of ten or twelve of their number by Pizarro. They were easily defeated with the loss of only three or four Spaniards, and a considerable reinforcement having now arrived from Panamá, the Spanish leader prepared to march into the interior, to get possession of Cuzco, the capital city of the Peruvians, and, if possible, of the person of the Inca. He had resolved to play the same game there by which Cortés had succeeded in Mexico, and by seizing the sovereign, and retaining him in confinement, to awe his subjects

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into submission. The treasure of gold and silver already obtained was sent to Panamá to pay the debts incurred for the outfit, and to stimulate fresh troops of adventurers to join his standard. Having founded, about thirty leagues from Tumbez, a new city, called San Miguel, to be a place of refuge in case of disaster, he left fifty men as its garrison, and with two hundred others commenced his march towards Cuzco. Satisfied that lenity was now his true policy, he forbade all acts of violence, and maintained strict discipline on the route. The placable and timid natives immediately ceased their hostilities, welcomed the troops to their hamlets, and furnished them abundant supplies. The reigning Inca, the unfortunate Atahuallpa, was collecting a large force near Caxamalca, but seemed undecided whether to offer defence, or to invite the strangers to visit his camp, and to afford them a hospitable reception. His indecision was fatal to him, as it caused him to leave unguarded the passes of the Andes, which it was necessary for Pizarro to cross, and where the natural difficulties of the route, united with the Peruvian fortresses already erected on it, might have more than compensated the superiority in arms of the invaders. We copy in part our historian's picturesque description of the passage of the Spaniards over the mountains.

"At early dawn the Spanish general and his detachment were under arms, and prepared to breast the difficulties of the sierra. These proved even greater than had been foreseen. The path had been conducted in the most judicious manner round the rugged and precipitous sides of the mountains, so as best to avoid the natural impediments presented by the ground. But it was necessarily so steep, in many places, that the cavalry were obliged to dismount, and, scrambling up as they could, to lead their horses by the bridle. In many places, too, where some huge crag or eminence overhung the road, this was driven to the very verge of the precipice; and the traveller was compelled to wind along the narrow ledge of rock, scarcely wide enough for his single steed, where a misstep would precipitate him hundreds, nay, thousands, of feet into the dreadful abyss! The wild passes of the sierra, practicable for the half-naked Indian, and even for the sure and circumspect mule, — an animal that seems to have been created for the roads of the Cordilleras, — were formidable to the man-at-arms encumbered with his panoply of mail. The tremendous fissures or *quebradas*, so frightful in this mountain chain, yawned open, as if the Andes had been split asunder

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by some terrible convulsion, showing a broad expanse of the primitive rock on their sides, partially mantled over with the spontaneous vegetation of ages; while their obscure depths furnished a channel for the torrents, that, rising in the heart of the sierra, worked their way gradually into light, and spread over the savannas and green valleys of the *tierra caliente* on their way to the great ocean.

"Many of these passes afforded obvious points of defence; and the Spaniards, as they entered the rocky defiles, looked with apprehension lest they might rouse some foe from his ambush. This apprehension was heightened, as, at the summit of a steep and narrow gorge, in which they were engaged, they beheld a strong work, rising like a fortress, and frowning, as it were, in gloomy defiance on the invaders. As they drew near this building, which was of solid stone, commanding an angle of the road, they almost expected to see the dusky forms of the warriors rise over the battlements, and to receive their tempest of missiles on their bucklers; for it was in so strong a position, that a few resolute men might easily have held there an army at bay. But they had the satisfaction to find the place untenanted, and their spirits were greatly raised by the conviction that the Indian monarch did not intend to dispute their passage, when it would have been easy to do so with success.

"Pizarro now sent orders to his brother to follow without delay; and, after refreshing his men, continued his toilsome ascent, and before nightfall reached an eminence crowned by another fortress, of even greater strength than the preceding. It was built of solid masonry, the lower part excavated from the living rock, and the whole work executed with skill not inferior to that of the European architect.

"Here Pizarro took up his quarters for the night. Without waiting for the arrival of the rear, on the following morning he resumed his march, leading still deeper into the intricate gorges of the sierra. The climate had gradually changed, and the men and horses, especially the latter, suffered severely from the cold, so long accustomed as they had been to the sultry climate of the tropics. The vegetation also had changed its character; and the magnificent timber which covered the lower level of the country had gradually given way to the funereal forest of pine, and, as they rose still higher, to the stunted growth of numberless Alpine plants, whose hardy natures found a congenial temperature in the icy atmosphere of the more elevated regions. These dreary solitudes seemed to be nearly abandoned by the brute creation as well as by man. The light-footed vicuña, roaming in its native state, might be sometimes seen looking down from some airy

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cliff, where the foot of the hunter dared not venture. But instead of the feathered tribes whose gay plumage sparkled in the deep glooms of the tropical forests, the adventurers now beheld only the great bird of the Andes, the loathsome condor, who, sailing high above the clouds, followed with doleful cries in the track of the army, as if guided by instinct in the path of blood and carnage.

"At length they reached the crest of the Cordillera, where it spreads out into a bold and bleak expanse, with scarce the vestige of vegetation, except what is afforded by the *pajonal*, a dried yellow grass, which, as it is seen from below, encircling the base of the snow-covered peaks, looks, with its brilliant straw-color lighted up in the rays of an ardent sun, like a setting of gold round pinnacles of burnished silver. The land was sterile, as usual in mining districts, and they were drawing near the once famous gold quarries on the way to Caxamalca;

> 'Rocks rich in gems, and mountains big with mines,
> That on the high equator ridgy rise.'

Here Pizarro halted for the coming up of the rear. The air was sharp and frosty; and the soldiers, spreading their tents, lighted fires, and, huddling round them, endeavoured to find some repose after their laborious march." — Vol. I., pp. 381 – 385.

The little army descended without loss, and occupied Caxamalca, where Pizarro prepared to carry into effect his plan for kidnapping the Inca, who was encamped with his army at a little distance. The simple monarch at once fell into the snare by accepting the invitation to visit the Spaniards in their quarters, and coming thither attended only by five or six thousand men, most of them unarmed. Pizarro had concealed his troops in the deserted temples and other public buildings around the great square, where the Inca was received only by a Dominican friar, who made him a long speech, inviting him to become a convert to the Christian religion, and to submit his kingdom to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who had received authority in a direct line from St. Peter to claim it as his inheritance. The native sovereign refused this modest request with some indignation. The scene which followed must be given in Mr. Prescott's own words.

"Pizarro saw that the hour had come. He waved a white scarf in the air, the appointed signal. The fatal gun was fired from the fortress. Then, springing into the square, the Spanish

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

captain and his followers shouted the old war-cry of 'St. Jago and at them.' It was answered by the battle-cry of every Spaniard in the city, as, rushing from the avenues of the great halls in which they were concealed, they poured into the *plaza*, horse and foot, each in his own dark column, and threw themselves into the midst of the Indian crowd. The latter, taken by surprise, stunned by the report of artillery and muskets, the echoes of which reverberated like thunder from the surrounding buildings, and blinded by the smoke which rolled in sulphurous volumes along the square, were seized with a panic. They knew not whither to fly for refuge from the coming ruin. Nobles and commoners, — all were trampled down under the fierce charge of the cavalry, who dealt their blows, right and left, without sparing; while their swords, flashing through the thick gloom, carried dismay into the hearts of the wretched natives, who now, for the first time, saw the horse and his rider in all their terrors. They made no resistance, — as, indeed, they had no weapons with which to make it. Every avenue to escape was closed, for the entrance to the square was choked up with the dead bodies of men who had perished in vain efforts to fly; and such was the agony of the survivors under the terrible pressure of their assailants, that a large body of Indians, by their convulsive struggles, burst through the wall of stone and dried clay which formed part of the boundary of the *plaza!* It fell, leaving an opening of more than a hundred paces, through which multitudes now found their way into the country, still hotly pursued by the cavalry, who, leaping the fallen rubbish, hung on the rear of the fugitives, striking them down in all directions.

. . . . . .

"The Indian monarch, stunned and bewildered, saw his faithful subjects falling round him without fully comprehending his situation. The litter on which he rode heaved to and fro, as the mighty press swayed backwards and forwards; and he gazed on the overwhelming ruin, like some forlorn mariner, who, tossed about in his bark by the furious elements, sees the lightning's flash and hears the thunder bursting around him with the consciousness that he can do nothing to avert his fate. At length, weary with the work of destruction, the Spaniards, as the shades of evening grew deeper, felt afraid that the royal prize might, after all, elude them; and some of the cavaliers made a desperate attempt to end the affray at once by taking Atahuallpa's life. But Pizarro, who was nearest his person, called out with Stentorian voice, 'Let no one, who values his life, strike at the Inca'; and, stretching out his arm to shield

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him, received a wound on the hand from one of his own men, — the only wound received by a Spaniard in the action.

"The struggle now became fiercer than ever round the royal litter. It reeled more and more, and at length, several of the nobles who supported it having been slain, it was overturned, and the Indian prince would have come with violence to the ground, had not his fall been broken by the efforts of Pizarro and some other of the cavaliers, who caught him in their arms. The imperial *borla* was instantly snatched from his temples by a soldier named Estete, and the unhappy monarch, strongly secured, was removed to a neighbouring building, where he was carefully guarded.

"All attempt at resistance now ceased. The fate of the Inca soon spread over town and country. The charm which might have held the Peruvians together was dissolved. Every man thought only of his own safety. Even the soldiery encamped on the adjacent fields took the alarm, and, learning the fatal tidings, were seen flying in every direction before their pursuers, who in the heat of triumph showed no touch of mercy. At length, night, more pitiful than man, threw her friendly mantle over the fugitives, and the scattered troops of Pizarro rallied once more at the sound of the trumpet in the bloody square of Caxamalca." — Vol. I., pp. 418 – 423.

Here, in fact, ends the story of the conquest of Peru. The hapless Inca was retained in confinement till his faithful subjects had placed in the hands of the Spaniards an immense treasure for his ransom, and then, in spite of the most solemn engagements, was remorselessly put to death. The spirit of the people was crushed, or rather the idea of resistance was not developed among them; the power which had suddenly established itself in the midst of their land, had imprisoned their heaven-descended sovereign, held him to ransom, and finally butchered him without cause, seemed too awful to contend with; perhaps opposition would be impiety. Certain it is that the Spaniards made themselves masters of Cuzco, and subjected all Peru to their sway, with but a single skirmish of any importance; and that was with a brave old chieftain, whom, as a punishment for his *rebellion*, Pizarro caused to be burned to death. Some time afterward, the outrages of which the conquerors were guilty stung the natives into revolt; for a few months they held the capital in siege, killed Juan Pizarro with many of his comrades in fair fight, and but for the seasonable return of Almagro

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with his force from Chili, the dominion of the Incas might again, though probably but for a short time, have been acknowledged throughout Peru. As it was, the coming of these veterans from the south turned the scale which till then had hung with an even beam; and the terrible punishment which they inflicted on the revolters riveted the chains upon this unhappy people for ever. They sought refuge in the mountains and the desert, or became serfs to their conquerors; and never was servitude more oppressive or more hopeless.

Mr. Prescott's second volume, quite equal in interest to his first, is nearly all occupied with a history of the wars of the Spaniards with each other, and of their several expeditions, most of them disastrous, for the exploration and conquest of the countries around Peru. The work ends with an account of the pacification of the country under the excellent President Gasca, after the Pizarros, the two Almagros, and many of their original comrades, were at rest in a prison or a bloody grave. The fate of the innocent Peruvians could not be averted, but it is some consolation to think that the chief authors of their woes and wrongs did not escape what seems the immediate judgment of Heaven any more than the future execration of mankind.

We do not anticipate for this work a popularity quite so extensive as that of the author's two former publications, though it would have made the fortune of a less distinguished historian. The subject is a somewhat inferior one in unity and importance, and had lost in part its freshness through the brilliant treatment of the very similar topic, the conquest of Mexico. The matter is better suited for a gorgeous episode in a larger history, than for a history by itself; and a little management has perhaps been used to add to its dignity, to make the characters seem more august and the incidents more momentous. There is a witchery in Mr. Prescott's style that enables him to give what impressions he likes, and which indisposes the reader to go beneath the surface of the splendid narrative or vivid description. We might refer to a passage already cited, the account of the seizure of Atahuallpa, as a specimen of a rather exaggerated tone of writing, which describes with all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war an incident that might be spoken of more simply, by one inclined to depreciate its importance, as the mere kidnapping

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of an Indian chief, and the butchery of his unarmed attendants, by a handful of bloodthirsty Spaniards, the act being accomplished by them without risk or the loss of a man. But the fault here is in the subject, and it only leads us to wonder more at the skill in the disposition of materials, and the command of style, which enable the historian to gloze over or cover up the defect. The incident in question was weighty enough in its consequences, as it was the turning-point of Pizarro's enterprise, and it therefore justified minute and elaborate treatment. Considered simply as a narrative of wild adventure and romantic achievement, this work is quite as attractive as its predecessors. We are hurried on with almost breathless interest from one scene or event to another, never impeded by confusion in the story or obscurity of style, seldom stopping to reflect or moralize, and finding so pleasant a variety of objects on the road, that the end of it comes unlooked for and unwelcome.

It is pleasant to hear that the book has had as hearty a reception in Europe as in this country. Translations of it, we learn, are already in progress into French, Spanish, and German, and a very large edition has found a rapid sale in England. Various learned societies, the doors of which have seldom or never been opened to an American, have added Mr. Prescott's name to their list of members; and in the case of the Royal Society of Literature, the compliment was enhanced by its coming to him through the hands of its distinguished president, Mr. Hallam. Lord Mahon was the organ of the Royal Society of Antiquaries for a similar purpose. We allude to these things more for their national than their personal interest; they show in what estimation American literature is coming to be held in Europe, and that the depreciating, if not sneering, tone in which it was spoken of not more than fifteen or twenty years ago is now considered unfair and in bad taste. No man living has contributed more to this change of opinion than Mr. Prescott; and we trust that his future labors will be equally effective for the growth of his own fame and his country's glory.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ART. VI. — 1. *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey.* By JOSEPH COTTLE. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1847. pp. 378.

2. *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions.* By S. T. COLERIDGE. Second Edition, prepared in part by the late H. N. COLERIDGE, completed and published by his Widow. London: William Pickering. 1847. 2 vols. 12mo.

THIRTEEN years have passed since the death of Coleridge, and his biography is still unwritten. The accounts of his character and life that have appeared have been fragmentary and unsatisfactory, leaving much to conjecture, and letting the curtain fall just where the spectator had become the most deeply interested. Still, from a comparison of these many partial accounts, and from his own letters and those of his friends, particularly of Southey and Lamb, which have been published within the last few years, one may gain a somewhat connected view of the life of this remarkable man. Two important contributions to this object have appeared within a few months; one, a *rifacimento* of a former work, coming from Coleridge's oldest surviving friend, who has gone back for fifty years, and brought together many reminiscences such as no one but himself could have supplied. The other comes from Coleridge's only daughter, connected with a new edition of his Biographia Literaria, in the shape of a Biographical Supplement to that work. It is invested with a peculiarly melancholy interest; having been commenced by Mr. Henry Nelson Coleridge, and its completion being prevented by his death, it is now published incomplete by his widow.

But these works still leave much to be desired. A character so remarkable as that of Mr. Coleridge deserves and demands some permanent record; a record which should at once be faithful in its delineation of those heights to which it rose almost "above a mortal pitch," and of those depths to which it sunk so low that one shudders to look down. But this would require no common hand; and as yet none of those who have written of Coleridge have given proof that they possessed the needed power. Foster, in speaking of the life that was promised and partially executed by Gillman, says, — "How I despise biography, as it is commonly

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

managed!" Had he been speaking of all the notices, with but few exceptions, that have appeared concerning Coleridge, he might have made much the same remark.

The old maxim, *Nil de mortuis nisi bonum*, seems to have been so much regarded as to cause the neglect of that more generous one, *Nil de mortuis nisi verum.* If a man's biography is worth writing at all, it is worth writing honestly. Coleridge in his Friend, says, — "It is, no doubt, the duty of an honest biographer to portray the prominent imperfections as well as excellences of his hero." A fame founded upon false grounds is not worth having. The highest interest and the only value which biography can possess must consist in its truth. The lights and the shades should be set off one against another, the springs of action should be shown; and when the whole has been told, the judgment may well be left to others, with an assured belief that time will bring about a righteous verdict. We would not be understood here as recommending that minute scrutiny of a man's life which would bring to light those details which can only gratify a malicious spirit or a childish curiosity. We consider nothing as more undesirable than this. What we would urge is, that there should be no concealment of that which is of real importance in forming a true estimate of the character; that there should not be

"A flattering, false insculption on the tomb,"

to belie the past and to deceive the future, but that the biographer should think of the dead, who have gone where deceit is vain, as saying to him, — "Speak of me as I was."

From the causes to which we have alluded, we have found it somewhat difficult to gain a satisfactory view of Mr. Coleridge's character; and it has only been from a comparison of the different publications concerning him with each other and with his own writings that we have been enabled to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born on the 21st of October, 1772, at Ottery, St. Mary, Devonshire. He was the youngest of ten children, and as his father, the vicar of the parish of Ottery and master of the grammar school, had but a small salary, the means of the family were, of course, much straitened. Of his mother but little has been handed down. We should judge that she was a devoted mother and wife; but

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she apparently had little strength of mind, and was ignorant how to develop the faculties of her children in the wisest manner, and weak enough to make the youngest her favorite. There are some stories respecting the eccentricities of the vicar which are interesting only as one can trace in them the origin of some of the peculiarities of his more distinguished son. Coleridge, in a letter to his friend Poole, says of his father, — "In learning, good-heartedness, absentness of mind, and excessive ignorance of the world, he was a perfect Parson Adams."

The early years of the future poet were passed sadly enough. Petted at home, he was tormented at school; driven from boyish plays, he read incessantly, while, "for amusement," he tells us, he would act over in the fields by himself the stories in the Arabian Nights and the Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.

"So I became a dreamer, and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity; I was fretful, and inordinately passionate; and as I could not play at any thing, and was slothful, I was despised and hated by the boys; and because I could read and spell, and had, I may truly say, a memory and understanding forced into almost unnatural ripeness, I was flattered and wondered at by all the old women. And so I became very vain, and despised most of the boys that were at all near my own age, and before I was eight years old I was a *character*. Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for almost all who traversed the orbit of my understanding, were even then prominent and manifest." — *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II., p. 320.

Well might he say to Mr. Poole, to whom, in 1797, he addressed a series of autobiographical letters,* from which we have made the foregoing extracts, — "To me this task will be a useful one. It will renew and deepen my reflections on the past; and it will perhaps make you behold with no unforgiving or impatient eye those weaknesses and defects in my character which so many untoward cicumstances have concurred in planting there."

In 1781, before Coleridge was nine years old, his father died. He continued to live with his mother at Ottery till the

* These letters are published, for the first time, in the Biographical Supplement to the new edition of the Biographia Literaria, and afford much fuller information of the early years of his life than we before possessed.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spring of 1782, when he was sent to London to remain with his uncle for a few weeks previous to entering Christ's Hospital.

"My uncle was very proud of me, and used to carry me from coffee-house to coffee-house, and tavern to tavern, where I drank, and talked, and disputed as if I had been a man. Nothing was more common than for a large party to exclaim in my hearing, that I was a prodigy, &c.; so that while I remained at my uncle's, I was most completely spoilt and pampered, both mind and body." — *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II., p. 326.

In July he was admitted to Christ's Hospital, and there underwent the trying experience in a boy's life, when, for the first time separated from home, he is thrown upon his own resources and compelled to make a place for himself. Coleridge remained at Christ's Hospital for eight years.

Here it was that that friendship with Charles Lamb, which death alone was permanently to interrupt, commenced; and long afterward Lamb embodied his recollections of the schoolboy life of his friend in that beautiful essay, "Christ's Hospital five-and-thirty Years ago." Who that has read his glowing description of Coleridge at this time, so sad from the contrast with his later life, can forget it, and who that has read it once but will be glad to read it again?

"Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee, — the dark pillar not yet turned, — Samuel Taylor Coleridge, — Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! — How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblicus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar, — while the walls of the old Grey Friars reëchoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!*"

The Reverend James Bowyer was at this period head master of Christ's Hospital. He was a stern master, and in Coleridge's opinion a sensible man. Coleridge through life was accustomed to speak in warm terms of the obligations which his pupils were under to him, not merely in regard to his discipline of their intellects, but also to the cultivation of their taste. He inspired them with a cordial

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

admiration of the classics, taught them to analyze their different beauties, and, by the comparison of their own compositions with those of the more elegant writers, pointed out to them the defects into which they were likely to fall, and the excellences which they should endeavour to attain. Little seems to have been done for their religious or moral education; though Coleridge long afterward admitted that he had received one just flogging at school, and that was for his taking occasion to declare himself an infidel. Coleridge stood high at school in his studies; not so much, however, from ambition, as from his natural facility of acquisition and strength of memory. He stood so high, indeed, that in 1790 he was elected to College, and bade farewell to school in a beautiful sonnet, beginning, —

> "Farewell, parental scenes! a sad farewell!
> To you my grateful heart still fondly clings,
> Though fluttering round on Fancy's burnished wings
> Her tale of future joy Hope loves to tell."

On the 5th of February, 1791, Coleridge entered at Jesus College, Cambridge. He was not yet nineteen years old.

His natural taste had led him to devote much time to various metaphysical and theological writers, whose obscure speculations had bewildered and unsettled a mind originally not well balanced. He had neglected mathematics and the other branches of exact science, and late in life he thus mournfully expressed his sense of the great disadvantage which this had been to him: — "In a long brief dream-life of regretted regrets, I still find a noticeable space marked out by the regret of having neglected the mathematical sciences. No weeks, few days, pass unhaunted by a fresh conviction of the truth in the Platonic superscription over the portal of Philosophy,'—

Μήδεις ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσίτω."

The want of that strict discipline of the reasoning powers which is gained by the study of mathematics was a loss of more than usual importance to Coleridge. Highly endowed with imagination by nature, his education had tended to develop this faculty still further, until it had assumed a disproportionate influence over his life. "History and particular facts lost all interest in my mind," he says of himself. He did more in forming plans than in executing them. His moral

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perceptions were strong and acute in regard to matters of theory, but his conscience was often silent and inoperative in the affairs of every-day occurrence. Flattered when a child, wondered at when a boy, conscious of possessing most remarkable powers, his vanity was at times excessive. He had no fixed principles and no high object to live for.

The summer after he entered college, he gained Sir William Brown's gold medal for the Greek ode. It was on the Slave-trade. Once or twice afterward he was an unsuccessful candidate for college honors, though there can be no doubt that at this time he was a very considerable proficient in classical studies.

An old college friend,* who very shortly after Coleridge's death published some reminiscences of these days, said of him, — "Coleridge was very studious, but his reading was desultory and capricious; he was ready at any time to unbend his mind in conversation, and for the sake of this, his room was a constant rendezvous of conversation-loving friends." Two years passed in this manner, the only fruits of which now remaining are a few short pieces in verse published among his "Juvenile Poems." That these were unsatisfactory years to himself we cannot doubt.

> "Prodigal and reckless of his priceless wealth,
> Time, talents, energies, occasion, health,"

he accomplished nothing worthy of himself. Indolence had thrown her leaden mantle over him, though now and then the thought of what he might be and do would come over him, and rouse him to temporary exertion. We do not doubt that he was always engaged in some literary pursuit, but he seems to have turned capriciously from one study to another, as his taste might dictate, and to have chosen that which most suited his inclination rather than that which might require exertion, or was fitted to discipline and cultivate his various powers. In lines written about this time, he says, —

> "To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assigned
> Energic reason and a shaping mind,
> The daring ken of Truth, the Patriot's part,
> And Pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart.
> Sloth-jaundiced all!" †

---

* C. V. Le Grice, College Reminiscences. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December, 1834.

† *Poetical Works*, Vol. I. p. 59, Boston, 1835.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is difficult, from the want of dates to most of his early poems, to assign them to any particular years; but the few that we are able to attribute to the period of his residence in Cambridge are characterized rather by beauty of expression and metrical harmony than by any remarkable depth of thought.

The summer of 1793 he spent at Ottery, and returned to Cambridge in October. He had not been here a month when suddenly he left his college and went to London. The motives which led to this hasty step can only be conjectured. Mr. Henry Nelson Coleridge, who is perhaps the best authority, says that he left Cambridge in a moment of despondency and vexation of spirit, occasioned principally by some debts, not amounting to one hundred pounds. Mr. Gillman thinks that his despondency was increased by his friend Middleton's leaving the University. Mr. Cottle says that Coleridge had told him that it was produced by the rejection of his addresses by a Miss Mary Evans, to whom he had written one or two poems, and whom he a year afterward mentions in a letter to his college friend Masters as "Mary Evans, *quam afflictim et perdite amabam.*"

In a few days after reaching London "he was reduced to want, and, observing a recruiting advertisement, resolved to get bread and overcome a prejudice at the same time, by becoming a soldier." He accordingly enlisted, and, in order to keep his initials, gave his name as Silas Titus, or Silas Tompkins, Cumberbach. His adventures as a soldier, as he afterwards related them, were uncomfortable and ridiculous enough, and we should judge that the comparison between the life of a student and that of a dragoon must have proved somewhat unfavorable to the latter. His friends meanwhile were at a loss to account for his sudden disappearance, when fortunately, by a chance recognition in the street, his situation became known, and his family with some difficulty effected his discharge. This we suppose was that "just so much of folly" which, as he imagined, was to "make his early manhood more securely wise."

In April, 1794, Coleridge returned to Cambridge, where he remained till the beginning of the summer vacation. But the adventures of the preceding six months had broken the continuity of his college life, and given birth to new plans for the future. He had now no chance of obtaining a fellowship

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the University, and had moreover become a professed Unitarian, a change which, of course, would shut him out from all those advantages that might have lain open to him had he remained a member of the Established Church. His friends have tried to make it appear that Coleridge was never at heart a Unitarian. Mr. H. N. Coleridge says, — "His Unitarianism, such as it was, was not of the ordinary quality." But as Mr. Talfourd, in his life of Lamb, has well remarked, — "There can be no doubt that Coleridge's Unitarianism was the result of strong conviction, so strong that with all the ardor of a convert he sought to win proselytes to his chosen creed, and proposed to spend his days in preaching it."

If Coleridge did all this under the name of Unitarianism, believing at the same time, as he afterward said he did, that the Unitarian interpretations of the Scripture were intolerable upon any principles of sound criticism, we confess that it shows a state of mind such as we cannot readily understand. But we do not believe that this was the case; we think that we meet here with a peculiarity of Coleridge's mind which was afterward shown in numerous instances. It seems to us that Coleridge was accustomed to adopt opinions of the highest importance, rather from their coincidence with certain temporary theories of his own, than from such a thorough analysis and examination of their foundations, as every reflecting man is called upon to make for himself. Of course, nothing was more likely than that, with advance in life, his theories should undergo a change, and consequently the opinions founded upon them, until by degrees, by a further process of self-deception, he persuaded himself that he never actually had held such opinions, but that there had always been in his mind some reserved clause, as it were, which had given a different character to the whole. This view will, we think, explain numerous inconsistencies in his character and writings, otherwise unintelligible; and afford some excuse for the manner in which he was accustomed to speak of Unitarianism in his later life. For instance, he says in a letter to Cottle, dated in 1807, — "Socinianism, misnamed Unitarianism, is not only not Christianity, it is not even religion; it does not *religate;* does not bind anew."* And again, in his

* Cottle's *Reminiscences*, p. 233.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Table Talk, he is represented as saying, — "Unitarianism is, in effect, the worst of one kind of Atheism joined to one of the worst kinds of Calvinism."*

We are tempted here to make another remark, suggested by our first quotation; that not unfrequently Coleridge's reasoning was founded on a verbal quibble, made to take the place of a logical argument, when no argument was to be found. To illustrate this still further, we quote again from the Table Talk: — "By the by, what do you [Unitarians] mean by exclusively assuming the title of Unitarians? As if Trio-Unitarians were not necessarily Unitarians, as much (pardon the illustration) as an apple-pie must of course be a pie!"†

But to return once more to our narrative. In June, 1794, leaving Cambridge, he went to Oxford to visit an old schoolfellow, and here for the first time met Southey, who was then an undergraduate at Baliol College. They appear to have been mutually interested in each other at once; and this chance visit laid the foundation of a friendship more valuable to Coleridge in after life than any other which he ever made. He did not long remain at Oxford, but soon, in company with two or three friends, set off on a pedestrian tour through a portion of Wales. On his return from this journey, Coleridge went by appointment to meet Southey at Bristol. Here they were to make arrangements for putting into execution a plan, which was formed probably at Oxford, for emigrating to America, accompanied by a few college friends, visionary like themselves, and, settling

"Where Susquehanna pours his untamed stream,"

"form a social colony, in which there was to be a community of property, and all that was selfish was to be proscribed." This scheme, under the title of Pantisocracy, had filled the minds of the young men with the most brilliant anticipations, and they determined to set earnestly to work to accomplish them. After a short stay at Bristol, where he was introduced to his future wife, and to Mr. Joseph Cottle, then a publisher in that city, and a writer of verse himself, Coleridge returned for the last time to Cambridge. Here he published The Fall of Robespierre, a drama writ-

* Vol. II., p. 20.

† Vol. II., p. 20.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ten jointly by himself and Southey, and showing but little talent. He then went to London, and renewed his friendship with Lamb. They used to meet in the evenings at the Salutation and Cat Inn, and here, drinking egg-hot and smoking Orinooko ("associated circumstances," as Lamb said, "which ever forcibly recall to my mind our evenings and nights at the Salutation"), they sat together through the winter nights, beguiling the cares of life with poetry.

Early in 1795, still full of Pantisocracy, he returned to Bristol and Southey, intending to set sail for America in the spring. But a serious question arose; how they were to obtain the funds necessary to carry out their scheme. Both the young men, moreover, had fallen in love, and with sisters, Sarah and Edith Fricker, and they wanted something to enable them to make provision for their marriage. They therefore determined to give public lectures at Bristol, and the winter and spring were occupied in this way. Coleridge lectured on political and moral subjects, Southey on historical. Two of his lectures Coleridge published under the title of *Conciones ad Populum*, and a third called "The Plot Discovered," without, we imagine, adding much to his income.

About this time, at Cottle's solicitation, Coleridge was preparing a volume of poems, for which he was to receive thirty guineas. His indolence and frequent neglect to furnish copy at the time promised are curiously illustrated by the notes which Cottle has preserved. Sometimes one engagement interfered, sometimes another; now "a devil, a very devil, had got possession of his left temple, eye, jaw, throat, and shoulder," and he could not write; now he (not the devil, but Mr. Coleridge) was "over the mouth and nose doing something of importance at Lovell's"; and so on, until Cottle at last grew tired of urging.

The volume was still further delayed by Coleridge's marriage, which took place on the 4th of October, 1795. He went immediately with his wife to a cottage at Clevedon, near Bristol, which must have been fitted up rather to gratify the taste than to satisfy the wants of its occupants, as two days after his marriage we find Coleridge writing to Cottle to ask him to send down "a riddle slice; a candle-box; two ventilators; two glasses for the wash-hand stand; one tin dust-pan; one small tin teakettle; one pair of candlesticks; one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

carpet-brush; one flour-dredge; three tin extinguishers; two mats; a pair of slippers; a cheese-toaster; two large tin spoons; a Bible; a keg of porter; coffee; raisins; currants; catsup; nutmegs; allspice; cinnamon; rice; ginger and mace."* The next day, probably after the receipt of these articles, Coleridge writes to Poole, calling it "our comfortable cot." In the same letter, he says, — "In the course of half a year I mean to return to Cambridge, having previously taken my name off from the University's control, and, hiring lodgings there for myself and wife, finish my great work of Imitations in two volumes. My former works may, I hope, prove somewhat of genius and of erudition; this will be better; it will show great industry and manly consistency."† But before the end of the year he had moved from Clevedon to Bristol, then to Stowey, to visit his friend Mr. Thomas Poole, and then back again to Bristol. Here again he set about preparing his poems for publication; but the same delays were interposed as before, and the volume made but slow progress. In February, he wrote, during a fit of despondency occasioned by the clouds hanging over the future, and his sense of his own remissness, —

"It is my duty and business to thank God for all his dispensations, and to believe them the best possible; but, indeed, I think I should have been more thankful, if he had made me a journeyman shoemaker instead of an author by trade. I have left friends; I have left plenty; I have left that ease which would have secured a literary immortality, and have enabled me to give to the public works conceived in moments of inspiration, and polished with leisurely solicitude; and, alas! for what have I left them? For ——, who deserted me in the hour of distress, and for a scheme of virtue impracticable and romantic."

We have no idea to what prospects of plenty or ease Coleridge can refer in this letter, as having been left by him. Nor do we know whose desertion he complains of, unless he calls it desertion in Southey to have given up, some months before, that scheme which he himself now calls "impracticable and romantic."

At last, in April, 1796, his volume of poems appeared, containing most of those pieces which have since been pub-

* Cottle, p. 30. † *Biog. Sup.* to *Biog. Lit.*, Vol. II., p. 348.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lished under the title of Juvenile Poems. Among them were his well known sonnet to Schiller, and the long poem called Religious Musings, which contains several passages of much beauty. Meanwhile, Coleridge, who had "given up" in October "all thoughts of a Magazine for various reasons," issued proposals in December for "a Miscellany to be called The Watchman, to be published on every eighth day from the first of March, to supply at once the places of a Review, Newspaper, and Annual Register." He soon set off on a tour to solicit subscriptions, and visited Worcester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and other places, preaching as a Unitarian wherever he could get an invitation to do so, and returned to Bristol in February, 1796, having succeeded in obtaining a large number of subscribers. The first number of The Watchman was issued on the 1st of March, the tenth and last on the 13th of May. The causes of its sudden failure were numerous. Coleridge himself wrote not more than a third of it, and even his portion was said to have but little striking merit. The prospectus had promised too much; the subscribers, becoming dissatisfied, fell off faster than they had been obtained, till at length the work did not pay its expenses. "Whatever was valuable and of a permanent nature in it was included in his later publications," says Mrs. H. N. Coleridge.

Plan after plan now succeeded, with such rapidity as to prevent any one of them from being carried into execution. First, Poole proposed to purchase an annuity for his friend, of which Coleridge writes, — "Concerning the scheme itself I am undetermined. Not that I am ashamed to receive; God forbid! I will make every possible exertion; my industry shall be at least commensurate with my learning and talents; if these do not procure for me and mine the necessary comforts of life, I can receive as I would bestow, and in either case, — receiving or bestowing, — be equally grateful to my Almighty Benefactor."* Coleridge's words frequently contrast strangely with his deeds. At this time, there were various literary pursuits open to him, from any one of which he might have gained a comfortable and respectable maintenance; but he rarely seems to have felt any honest shame about receiving, as a gift, money which he might have earned.

* *Biog. Sup.* to *Biog. Lit.*, p. 367.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

During the last year or two, Cottle had made him frequent presents. He had given him the paper on which The Watchman was printed, had borne a large share of the burden of the loss on it, and seems, through the whole course of his acquaintance with Coleridge, to have been a most generous and unexacting friend.

The plan for the annuity failed, and Coleridge thought of taking charge of a school, which was offered to him on very advantageous terms. At the same time, the editor of the London Morning Chronicle proposed to him to write for his paper; but Coleridge hesitated, and nothing was done. At last, Mr. Charles Lloyd, the son of a banker at Birmingham, where he had become acquainted with Mr. Coleridge, proposed to him to receive him as an inmate in his family, "and made him such a pecuniary offer that Mr. Coleridge immediately acceded to the proposal." Lloyd was a young man of considerable literary taste, and, suffering from a deranged state of the nervous system, imagined that a residence with Coleridge would at once enable him to cultivate his mind and improve his health. Coleridge consequently took a house at Stowey, near Mr. Poole. Here his eldest son was born, and named after the metaphysician David Hartley, of whom Coleridge was then an admiring disciple. Wordsworth was living near Stowey, and with him Coleridge had already contracted a close intimacy. And now, with a home of his own, with friends around him, there seemed nothing to prevent him from accomplishing some of those literary projects which he had so often dreamed of. Two years before, he had read to Cottle "a list of eighteen different works, which he had resolved to write, several of them in quarto." Now was the time for him to prepare at least some one of them. But "men of genius," it is said, "are rarely either prompt in action or consistent in general conduct. Their early habits have been those of contemplative indolence, and the day-dreams with which they have been accustomed to amuse their solitude adapt them for splendid speculation, not temperate and practicable counsels."*

So Coleridge wrote this very year, and such is the history of his literary life. His poems, however, were now to be published in a second edition, and with them were to be con-

* *The Friend*, Vol. II., p. 188.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nected poems by his two friends, Lamb and Lloyd. The volume advanced but slowly, and we must leave the story of its completion to take notice of a letter which is of infinite importance, as connected with the history of Coleridge's life from this time. On the 5th of November, 1796, Coleridge writes to Poole as follows: —

"I wanted such a letter as yours, for I am very unwell. On Wednesday night, I was seized with an intolerable pain from my right temple to the tip of my right shoulder, including my right eye, cheek, jaw, and that side of the throat. I was nearly frantic, and ran about the house almost naked, endeavouring by every means to excite sensation in different parts of my body, and so to weaken the enemy by creating a division. It continued from one in the morning till half past five, and left me pale and fainty. It came on fitfully, but not so violently, several times on Thursday, and began severer threats towards night; but I took between sixty and seventy drops of laudanum, and sopped the Cerberus just as his mouth began to open. On Friday it only niggled, as if the chief had departed, as from a conquered place, and merely left a small garrison behind, or as if he had evacuated the Corrica, and a few straggling pains only remained. But this morning he returned in full force, and his name is Legion. Giant-Fiend of a hundred hands, with a shower of arrowy death-pangs he transpierced me, and then he became a wolf and lay gnawing my bones! — I am not mad, most noble Festus! but in sober sadness I have suffered this day more bodily pain than I had before a conception of. My right cheek has certainly been placed with admirable exactness under the focus of some invisible burning-glass, which concentrated all the rays of a Tartarean sun. My medical attendant decides it to be altogether nervous, and that it originates either in severe application or excessive anxiety. My beloved Poole, in excessive anxiety I believe it might originate. I have a blister under my right ear, and I take 25 drops of laudanum every five hours, the ease and spirits gained by which have enabled me to write to you this flighty, but not exaggerating, account. With a gloomy wantonness of imagination I had been coquetting with the hideous possibles of disappointment. I drank fears like wormwood, — yea, — made myself drunken with bitterness; for my ever-shaping and distrustful mind still mingled gall-drops, till out of the cup of Hope I almost poisoned myself with Despair." — *Biog. Sup. to Biog. Lit.*, Vol. II., pp. 380, 381.

This strange letter, apparently written under the excitement consequent upon excessive use of laudanum, "records," his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

daughter says, "Coleridge's first experience of opium." In after years, Coleridge himself repeatedly affirmed that bodily pain first led him to make use of this drug, which became the terrible curse of his life; but he was accustomed to give an account altogether different from that in this letter of his first experience of it. Writing in 1826, he said, — "I had been ignorantly deluded by the seeming magic effects of opium in the sudden removal of a supposed rheumatic affection, attended with swellings in my knees and palpitations in my heart and pains all over me, by which I had been bed-ridden for nearly six months."* We find no notice, among the numerous letters and memoranda belonging to his early life, of this illness, and we have little doubt that he deceived himself with regard to this being the origin of the awful habit which became fixed upon him. Nor do we suppose that the letter from which we have quoted tells the story of its beginning. We think it must have commenced still earlier. We are willing to believe, in accordance with his repeated asseverations, that bodily pain first led him to use opium, although his admirer, Mr. De Quincey, has said, — "I believe it to be notorious that he first began the use of opium, not as a relief from any bodily pains or nervous irritations, for his constitution was strong and excellent, but as a source of luxurious sensations."† But we judge that in 1796 it was already a habit of self-indulgence, and that his mind was ill at ease. Lamb writes to him on the 8th of November in that year: —

"My brother, my friend, — I am distressed for you, believe me I am; not so much for your painful, troublesome complaint, which, I trust, is only for a time, as for those anxieties which brought it on, and perhaps even now may be nursing its malignity. Tell me, dearest of my friends, is your mind at peace, or has any thing, yet unknown to me, happened to give you fresh disquiet, and steal from you all the pleasant dreams of future rest? Are you still (I fear you are) far from being comfortably settled? Would to God it were in my power to contribute towards the bringing you into the haven where you would be! But you are too well skilled in the philosophy of consolation to need my humble tribute of advice; in pain, and in sickness, and

* Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*, Vol. I., p. 246. See also Cottle's *Rem.* p. 272.

† *Tait's Magazine* for 1834, p. 593.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in all manner of disappointments, I trust you have that within you which shall speak peace to your mind." — Talfourd's *Life of Lamb*, p. 12.

That peace of mind which Lamb trusted was in his friend's possession was never again permanently his.

In May, 1797, appeared "Poems by S. T. Coleridge. Second Edition. To which are added Poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd."

The motto on the title-page was as follows: — "*Duplex nobis vinculum, et amicitiæ et similium junctarumque Camœnarum; quod utinam neque mors solvat, neque temporis longinquitas.*" To this was subjoined a fictitious reference, *Groscoll. Epist. ad Cav. Utenhof. et Ptol. Lux. Tast.*; — the professed quotation and the reference being equally the fabrication of Coleridge.

This year has been well called the *annus mirabilis* of Coleridge's life; his poetical powers had reached their culminating point. That wonderful poem, The Ancient Mariner, the first and perhaps the more beautiful part of Christabel, the finest of his tragedies, Remorse, were all composed in this year, as well as that beautiful little poem entitled Love, and those lines, whose exquisite melody is only equalled by their wildness, beginning, —

> "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree;
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,
> Through caverns measureless to man,
> Down to a sunless sea."
>
> *Poetical Works*, Vol. I., p. 266.

This surely was enough for one year, a year of which we have no other memorials. The next year begins, somewhat sadly, with a quarrel between the three friends. We do not know the cause of it, but we suspect that Coleridge was somewhat ungenerous to Lamb and Lloyd, and, their joint volume not meeting with the success he anticipated, was inclined to charge the failure on the additions to it made by his friends. At any rate, in March, 1798, we find him writing to Cottle, — "Times change and people change; but let us keep our souls in quietness! I have no objection to any disposal of Lloyd's poems except that of their being republished with mine. The motto which I had prefixed, —

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'*Duplex*,' &c., from Groscollius, has placed me in a ridiculous situation, but it was a foolish and presumptuous start of affectionateness, and I am not unwilling to incur the punishment due to my folly." * And in June, Lloyd writes to Cottle, — "I thank you many times for your pleasing intelligence respecting Coleridge. I cannot think I have acted with or from passion towards him." † The state of Lamb's feelings toward Coleridge appears in a very amusing letter which he wrote to him about this time, and of which he transmitted a copy to Southey, saying: —

"Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia, — 'Poor Lamb (these were his last words) if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me'; — in ordinary cases I thanked him, I have an 'Encyclopedia' at hand; but on such an occasion as going over to a German University, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.

"*Theses quædam Theologicæ.*

I.

"Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?

II.

"Whether the archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would?*

III.

"Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the Schoolmen term 'virtutes minus splendidæ, et hominis et terræ nimis participes?'

IV.

"Whether the seraphim ardentes do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue?

V.

"Whether the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever *sneer?*

VI.

"Whether pure intelligences can *love*, or whether they can love any thing besides pure intellect?

VII.

"Whether the beatific vision be any thing more or less than a

* Cottle's *Reminiscences*, p. 124. † *Ibid.* p. 129.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking-glasses?

VIII.

"Whether an 'immortal and amenable soul' may not come *to be damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?*

"Samuel Taylor hath not deigned an answer; was it impertinent in me to avail myself of that offered source of knowledge?" — Lamb's *Life*. New York. 1838. Vol. I. p. 56.

The sarcasms of this letter, however sportive, and the estimate of Coleridge's character implied in the questions proposed, must have cut him to the quick; and it shows kindliness of feeling on both sides that, two years after, they were as good friends as ever.

In February, 1798, the Unitarian clergyman of Shrewsbury came to settle at Bristol, and Coleridge determined to offer himself as his successor at Shrewsbury. His preaching was liked, and he received an invitation from the parish; but meanwhile the Messrs. Wedgwood, the distinguished manufacturers, who had become acquainted with Coleridge at Birmingham some years before, and had formed a high idea of his talents, determined to prevent him, if possible, from becoming a Unitarian clergyman. Their own religious views were much opposed to those which Coleridge professed, and they seem to have regretted that his talents should be employed in promulgating what they held to be false opinions. Accordingly, Mr. Josiah Wedgwood offered £ 100 to Coleridge if he would reject the Shrewsbury invitation. This offer was declined, and Coleridge accepted the invitation to Shrewsbury. The Messrs. Wedgwood then offered him an annuity of £ 150 a year for an indefinite series of years, if he would then, at that late hour, give up the idea of becoming a clergyman. Coleridge says, — "The moment I received Mr. J. Wedgwood's letter, I accepted his offer." *

It is commonly supposed, at least among us, that when a man determines to be a clergyman, he does so from some motive of duty, with some idea of self-sacrifice. But with Coleridge it was different; his profession was worth more to him than one hundred pounds, but one hundred and fifty pounds a year weighed down the scale.

* Cottle's *Reminiscences*, p. 131.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This arrangement having been concluded, Coleridge seems to have given himself up again to forming plans for the future. Wordsworth's first work, The Lyrical Ballads, was published in the course of the summer, anonymously, and with it appeared The Ancient Mariner. During the autumn, Wordsworth and Coleridge determined to carry out an intention long held, of visiting Germany together. In September, they left England, accompanied by Miss Wordsworth, Mrs. Coleridge remaining at home. Probably Coleridge had much less consideration for his wife than when he wrote, —

> " Oft, oft, methinks, the while with thee
> I breathe, as from the heart, thy dear
> And dedicated name, I hear
> A promise and a mystery,
> A pledge of more than passing life,
> Yea, in that very name of wife!"
>
> *Poetical Works*, Vol. I., p. 178.

In Miss Wordsworth, who had been living with her brother during the period of Coleridge's residence near Stowey, he had become acquainted with a woman superior in intellect to his wife, and more able, probably, to sympathize with his peculiarities of character. He sought her society, while his wife was sometimes neglected. The face of her who was so closely bound to him must have awakened frequent feelings of self-reproach in his heart. These feelings may have led him to form resolutions of exertion, never carried beyond a determination, and too often checked by the vanity which overlaid his character. Lamb said of him, — " Coleridge is a man of excellent principles, but it 's very unfortunate that whenever any thing comes to him in the shape of a duty, he can't find the heart to perform it."

Of his residence in Germany we have many memorials, principally letters of his own. It seems to have been uneventful and agreeable. He said of it himself, — " I made the best use of my time and means, and there is therefore no period of my life upon which I can look back with such unmingled satisfaction."* In a letter to Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, dated Göttingen, May 21, 1799, he says, — " I have read and made collections for a history of Belles Lettres in

* *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. I., p. 211.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Germany before the time of Lessing, and very large collections for a life of Lessing." In November of the same year, he returned to England, and went immediately to London. In January, 1800, he writes to Mr. Thomas Wedgwood, —

"Thank God, I have my health perfectly, and am working hard, yet the present state of human affairs presses on me for days together, so as to deprive me of all my cheerfulness. It is probable that a man's private and personal connections and interests ought to be uppermost in his daily and hourly thoughts, and that the dedication of too much fear and hope to subjects which are perhaps disproportionate to our faculties and powers is a disease. But I have had this disease so long, and my early education was so domestic, that I know not how to get rid of it, or even to wish to get rid of it. Life were so flat a thing without enthusiasm, that if for a moment it leaves me, I have a sort of stomach sensation attached to all my thoughts, like those which succeed to the pleasurable sensations of a dose of opium." *

He goes on to speak of his literary occupations, says he is about to write essays on the drama for the Morning Post, and then says, — "Two mornings and one whole day I dedicate to essays on the possible progressiveness of man, and on the principles of population. In April, I retire to my greater work, — The Life of Lessing."

In February, he seems to have been reporting for the Morning Post, and to have written various essays on general subjects for its columns. In fact, when he first came to London, he proposed to write daily for that paper. But Mr. Stuart, who was then its editor, says, writing in 1838 in the Gentleman's Magazine, — "Coleridge totally failed in the plan he proposed of writing daily on the daily occurrences." From this time, however, until 1802, he continued to write at intervals for the paper, and some of his essays have been said to possess undoubtedly high merit.

Toward the end of July, 1800, Coleridge wrote to Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, — "Have you seen my translation of Wallenstein? It is a dull, heavy play. I am now working at my Introduction to the Life of Lessing, which I trust will be in the press before Christmas; that is, the Introduction will be published first." †

The translation of Wallenstein had just appeared. To us

* Cottle's *Reminiscences*, p. 318. † *Ibid.* p. 224.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it seems quite equal to the original; the defects incident to a translation are for the most part avoided, and there are magnificent passages added by Coleridge to the play. The opinion that Coleridge expressed concerning its merits when it first appeared is very different from that which he afterwards held. In 1821, writing to Mr. Alsop, he says: —

"I am glad you are now to see the Wallenstein for the first time, as you will then see a specimen of my happiest attempts, during the prime manhood of my intellect, before I had been buffeted by adversity, or crossed by fatality." — *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge*, p. 65.

In another letter, written from Keswick, in November, 1800, Coleridge says: —

"Immediately on my arrival in this country, I undertook to finish a poem which I had begun, entitled Christabel, for a second volume of the Lyrical Ballads. I tried to perform my promise, but the deep, unutterable disgust which I had suffered in the translation of the accursed Wallenstein seemed to have stricken me with barrenness, — till one day I dined out at the house of a neighbouring clergyman, and somehow or other drank so much wine, that I found some effort and dexterity requisite to balance myself on the hither edge of sobriety. The next day my verse-making faculties returned to me and I proceeded successfully." — Cottle's *Reminiscences*, p. 325.

At the time of the date of this letter, Coleridge was living at Keswick, where he had taken a small house. His son Derwent was just born, and here in quiet he intended to finish some one or more of his literary undertakings. He writes to Wedgwood, — "You will in three weeks see the letters on the 'Rise and Condition of the German Boors'; they are in the printer's hands." But many a three weeks passed, and Mr. Wedgwood never saw them. For the next two years, from November, 1800, to September, 1802, we have no records whatever of Coleridge's life, no letters, no memoranda, even. His fine ode to Dejection, addressed, we conjecture, to Miss Wordsworth, and that most beautiful of all his poems, The Complaint and Reply,* are almost the

* We are aware, that, in the Literary Remains, this poem is ascribed to the year 1809; but Mrs. H. N. Coleridge says it was written in 1802, and we are inclined to trust to her authority, as we have found one or two instances of mistakes in the dates assigned in the Literary Remains.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only compositions of this period. In September, 1802, Lamb made a three weeks' visit to Coleridge. After this, he wrote some essays in the Morning Post, and in October he writes to Mr. Thomas Wedgwood : —

"I shall in a few weeks go to press with a volume on the prose writings of Hale, Milton, and Taylor, and shall immediately follow it up with an essay on the writings of Dr. Johnson and Gibbon, and in these two volumes I flatter myself I shall present a fair history of English prose. If my life and health remain, and I do but write half as much and as regularly as I have done during the last six weeks, this will be finished by January next ; and I shall then put together my memorandum-book on the subject of poetry.... I have, since my twentieth year, meditated an heroic poem on the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. This is the pride and the stronghold of my hope ; but I never think of it except in my best moods. The work to which I dedicate the ensuing year of my life is one which highly pleased Leslie,* in prospective."

Again there is a period of a year in which no work was published, and of which few records remain. Those few are sad. In a letter dated September, 1803, he says : — "I will not trouble you with the gloomy tale of my health. When I am awake, by patience, employment of mind, and walking, I can keep the fiend at arm's length ; but the night is my hell ! sleep my tormenting angel. Three nights out of four I fall asleep, struggling to lie awake, and my frequent night screams have almost made me a nuisance in my own house."† Again, in January, 1804, he says, — "I have been ill, very ill,"‡ and refers to similar sufferings. He then speaks of going to Madeira to restore his health, and says, — "Wordsworth had, as I may truly say, forced on me one hundred pounds in the event of my going to Madeira, and Stuart had kindly offered to befriend me." But no southern isle had balm to restore that wasted health, no friend could assist him where he wanted aid. In the same letter he says, — "I am eager to hope all good things of my health. That gained, I have a cheering, and I trust prideless, confidence that I shall make an active and perseverant use of the faculties and acquirements that have been intrusted to my keeping, and a fair trial of their height, depth, and width."

---

* The eminent Edinburgh Professor. † Cottle's *Rem.*, p. 345. ‡ *Ibid.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There can be no doubt that the sufferings detailed in the foregoing extracts were the result of an excessive use of opium. In the Confessions of an English Opium Eater, sufferings of the same nature are depicted with a terrible vividness. Nothing can be more mournful than the warnings which Coleridge himself has left us. In his Friend, he says: —

"Restlessness can drive us to vices that promise no enjoyment, not even the cessation of that restlessness. This is, indeed, the dread punishment attached by nature to habitual vice, that its impulses wax, as its motives wane. No object, not even the light of a solitary taper in the far distance, tempts the benighted mind from before; but its own restlessness dogs it from behind as with the iron goad of destiny." — p. 137.

And again, in the poem called The Visionary Hope: —

"Sad lot to have no hope! Though, lowly kneeling,
He fain would frame a prayer within his breast;
Would fain entreat for some sweet breath of healing,
That his sick body might have ease and rest;
He strove in vain! the dull sighs from his chest
Against his will the stifling load revealing,
Though Nature forced; though like some captive guest,
Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,
An alien's restless mood but half concealing,
The sternness on his gentle brow confessed
Sickness within and miserable feeling:
Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,
And dreaded sleep each night repelled in vain,
Each night was scattered by its own loud screams:
Yet never could his heart command, though fain,
One deep full wish to be no more in pain."

In the spring of 1804, in a miserable state of health, Coleridge determined to go to Malta.* He could hardly have adopted a worse plan. Removed from his friends, exposed to the enervating effects of a southern climate, he fell more and more under the terrible bondage of opium. For some time, he performed the duties of public secretary of the island; but his habits were too irregular for such a post, and before long he was superseded. During his residence in Malta, he saw much of Sir Alexander Ball, then civil com-

* Mrs. H. N. Coleridge states that he lectured in London in 1804, before going to Malta.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

missioner of the island, and he speaks in his Friend "of that daily and familiar intercourse with him which made the fifteen months from May, 1804, to October, 1805, in many respects the most memorable and instructive period of my life." There are very few other records of this period.*

From Malta, Coleridge went to Italy, and remained in Rome for some months. Here he became acquainted with our distinguished countryman, Mr. Allston. This acquaintance ripened into a friendship of many years, which Allston has commemorated in a sonnet written after Coleridge's death.

Coleridge was hurried away from Italy, after some months' residence, as being a suspicious person, having written for the Morning Post, three years before, one or two invectives against Napoleon. At what time of the year he returned to England we are uncertain, and for the remainder of his life, with the exception of a few important events, we must fix the dates by inference, rather than from actual knowledge. The Biographia Literaria contains nothing of autobiography after this date, and the new Biographical Supplement to it has little narrative after 1800; Cottle, except as regards one point, deserts us at the time of the Malta voyage; Gillman's miserable volume is worth almost nothing with respect to the biography of Coleridge, while from the miscellaneous sketches of his life but few facts can be gleaned.

In December, 1806, we find Charles Lamb writing, — "Coleridge has come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution." We do not know whether these lectures were delivered. If they were, like those of 1804 and 1808, they have left no trace behind them.

De Quincey, who saw Coleridge in 1807, says of him, — "Never had I beheld so profound an expression of cheerless despondency; and the restless activity of Coleridge's mind in chasing abstract truths, and burying himself in the dark places of human speculation, seemed to me in great measure an attempt to escape out of his own personal wretchedness." And wretched he must have been, now at London, now at

* Decatur was at this time stationed in the Mediterranean, and was frequently at Malta. He met Coleridge at Sir A. Ball's table, they were mutually interested in each other, and in after life both referred to their intercourse at this time with pleasure. See Mackenzie's *Life of Decatur*, p. 128.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Keswick and Grassmere, now at Stowey and Bridgewater, finding no relief from the miserable sufferings which goaded him to a continual restlessness. It was at this time that he wrote to his friend Mr. Wade the following strange and melancholy words: —

"It is not of comparative utility I speak; for as to what has been actually done, and in relation to useful effects produced, whether on the minds of individuals or of the public, I dare boldly stand forward, and (let every man have his own, and that be counted mine which but for and through me would not have existed) will challenge the proudest of my literary contemporaries to compare proofs with me, of usefulness in the excitement of reflection, and the diffusion of original and forgotten, yet necessary and important, truths and knowledge; and this is not the less true, because I have suffered others to reap all the advantages. But, O dear friend, this consciousness, raised by insult of enemies and alienated friends, stands me in little stead to my own soul, — in how little, then, before the all-righteous Judge! who, requiring back the talents he had intrusted, will, if the mercies of Christ do not intervene, not demand of me what I have done, but why I did not do more; why, with powers above so many, I had sunk in many things below most! But this is too painful, and in remorse we often waste the energy which should be better employed in reformation, — that essential part, and only possible proof, of sincere repentance." — *Cottle*, p. 257.

In the course of this year, Mr. De Quincey, who was a young man of fortune, presented to Mr. Coleridge, anonymously, through Cottle, a gift of three hundred pounds. He had become deeply interested in him through sympathy with his sufferings as an opium-eater, and had an excessive admiration for his powers of mind. Writing in 1834, he speaks of him as having "the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and the most comprehensive, in my judgment, that has yet existed amongst men." This sum of money for a time rendered Coleridge easy in his circumstances; but before long a large portion of it had been spent in procuring opium. At length, in 1808 or 1809, leaving his wife and children to be taken care of by Southey, at Keswick, Coleridge went to live with Wordsworth at Grassmere.

Here The Friend was projected, and in good part written, and here its publication, in numbers, commenced on the 8th

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of June, 1809. In the prospectus of it, extracted from a letter to a correspondent, he says : —

"It is not unknown to you, that I have employed almost the whole of my life in acquiring, or endeavouring to acquire, useful knowledge by study, reflection, observation, and by cultivating the society of my superiors in intellect, both at home and in foreign countries. You know, too, that at different periods of my life I have not only planned, but collected the materials for, many works on various and important subjects; so many, indeed, that the number of my unrealized schemes and the mass of my miscellaneous fragments have often furnished my friends with a subject of raillery and sometimes of regret and reproof.* Waiving the mention of all private and accidental hindrances, I am inclined to believe that this want of perseverance has been produced in the main by an over-activity of thought, modified by a constitutional indolence, which made it more pleasant to me to continue acquiring, than to reduce what I had acquired to a regular form. Add, too, that, almost daily throwing off my notices or reflections in desultory fragments, I was still tempted onward by an increasing sense of the imperfection of my knowledge, and by the conviction, that, in order fully to comprehend and develop any one subject, it was necessary that I should make myself master of some other, which again as regularly involved a third, and so on with an ever-widening horizon."

These sentences, which very truly depict one portion of Coleridge's intellect, give the secret of the want of success attending the first publication of The Friend. He had proposed to himself too much in stating, — "The object of The Friend is to uphold those truths and those merits which are founded in the nobler and permanent parts of our nature against the caprices of fashion, and such pleasures as either depend on transitory and accidental causes, or are pursued from less worthy impulses." The subject was too vast, and constantly led him into desultory disquisitions, which, although connected more or less with the original design, still left a feeling of dissatisfaction that further progress was not

* Lamb, in a most admirably humorous letter to Manning, dated December 25th, 1815, says, — "Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt of nature but a week or two before — poor Col.! but two days before he died, he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the 'Wanderings of Cain,' in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion." — Talfourd's *Life of Lamb*, Vol. I., p. 174.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

made. The Friend is too well known to need any criticism from us. It is somewhat difficult, however, to judge of its merits, as first published, from the later editions, which are the only ones we have seen. For the edition of 1818, which the later ones have followed, "was rather a *rifacimento*," as the author said, "than a new edition, the additions forming so large a portion of the whole work, and the arrangement being altogether new."

The 27th and last number of the Lake edition was issued March 15th, 1810. It had proved a ruinous speculation in a pecuniary point of view, but, as affording Coleridge a regular employment for so long a period, it had been of essential service in restoring a somewhat more healthy tone to his mind. But again left without employment, his old habits returned and increased upon him, so that the next year is a blank in his life, and we know nothing more of him till we find him, in 1810, accompanying Mr. Basil Montagu to London, having left Keswick and Grassmere for ever. Before many months had passed, however, he went from Mr. Montagu to live at Hammersmith, with a Mr. Morgan, a gentleman whom he had known when at Bristol. Whilst here, he delivered a course of lectures before the London Philosophical Society. The prospectus was in part as follows: — "Mr. Coleridge will commence on Monday, November 19th, 1811, a course of lectures on Shakspeare and Milton, in illustration of the principles of poetry, and their application, as grounds of criticism, to the most popular works of later English poets, those of the living included." Of these lectures, as of his former courses, no report has been preserved. In the year 1811, Coleridge wrote frequently for the Courier, a paper which Mr. Stuart, the former editor of the Morning Post, now conducted. His communications were highly valued and well paid for. For some time he wrote with regularity, and we are left in doubt on what grounds he ceased to write for the paper.

How long he continued with the Morgans we do not know, but we imagine not later than 1813. While with them his health had again much improved, owing to the cause stated by Southey, in a letter written in 1815, in which he says, — "The Morgans, with great effort, succeeded in making him leave off opium for a time, and he recovered in consequence health and spirits"; and Coleridge

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

himself refers to the fact, in a letter written in April, 1814. But the victory was not complete, and the drug again assumed its awful dominion over him.

In the course of 1813, his tragedy, Remorse, was performed with the most flattering and merited success at Drury Lane; Coleridge writes to his friend Mr. Poole, on the 13th of February: — "I have never seen the play since the first night. It has been a good thing for the Theatre, ... and I shall get more by it than all my literary labors put together; nay, thrice as much, subtracting my heavy losses in the Watchman and the Friend, including the copyright." * In 1814, he delivered a course of lectures on Shakspeare at the Royal Institution, and when he had completed this course in London, he went down to Bristol to repeat it. But now, as when delivering a former course in London as described by De Quincey, "never did a man treat his audience with less respect, or his task with less careful attention." Sometimes he would keep his audience waiting for an hour or more, and sometimes he would not appear at all. Meanwhile, his manner was strange, and he complained much of illness. At length, his old friend, Mr. Cottle, addressed a long and earnest letter to him, beseeching him to renounce the use of opium and spirits. Coleridge replied in the following painfully degraded words: —

"You have poured oil in the raw and festering wound of an old friend's conscience, Cottle! but it is *oil of vitriol!* I but barely glanced at the middle of the first page of your letter, and have seen no more of it, — not from resentment, God forbid! but from the state of my bodily and mental sufferings, that scarcely permitted human fortitude to let in a new visitor of affliction.

"The object of my present reply is to state the case just as it is, — first, that for ten years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger staring, but the consciousness of my GUILT worse, — far worse than all! I have prayed, with drops of agony on my brow; trembling, not only before the justice of my Maker, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. 'I gave thee so many talents, what hast thou done with them?' Secondly, overwhelmed as I am with a sense of my direful infirmity, I have never attempted to disguise or conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole case with tears and the very bitterness of shame, but

* *Biog. Supp.* to *Biog. Lit.*, p. 413.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in two instances I have warned young men, mere acquaintances, who had spoken of having taken laudanum, of the direful consequences, by an awful exposition of its tremendous effects on myself. . . . . Had I but a few hundred pounds, but £200, — half to send to Mrs. Coleridge and half to place myself in a private madhouse, where I could procure nothing but what the physician thought proper, and where a medical attendant could be constantly with me for two or three months (in less than that time, life or death would be determined), then there might be hope. Now there is none!! O God! how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox, in his establishment; for my case is a species of madness, only it is a derangement, an utter impotence, of the volition, and not of the intellectual faculties." — Cottle's *Reminiscences*, pp. 272, 273.

His plan of going to an asylum for the insane Coleridge proposed again, and wrote to Cottle to ask him to get up a subscription among his, Coleridge's, friends, to defray the expenses attendant on its execution. To this, however, Cottle was averse, and wrote to consult Southey, with whom Coleridge's wife and children had been living for several years, as to what was best to be done. Southey's reply was as follows: —

"*Keswick, April*, 1814.

"My dear Cottle, — You may imagine with what feelings I have read your correspondence with Coleridge. Shocking as his letters are, perhaps the most mournful thing they discover is, that, while acknowledging the guilt of the habit, he imputes it still to morbid bodily causes; whereas, after every possible allowance is made for these, every person who has witnessed his habits knows that for the greater, infinitely the greater part, inclination and indulgence are its motives.

"It seems dreadful to say this, with his expressions before me; but it is so, and I know it to be so, from my own observation, and that of all with whom he has lived. The Morgans, with great difficulty and perseverance, *did* break him of the habit, at a time when his ordinary consumption of laudanum was from *two quarts a week* to *a pint a day!* He suffered dreadfully during the first abstinence, so much so as to say it was better for him to die than to endure his present feelings. Mrs. Morgan resolutely replied, it was indeed better that he should die than that he should continue to live as he had been living. It angered him at the time, but the effort was persevered in.

"To what, then, was the relapse owing? I believe to this cause, — that no use was made of renewed health and spirits;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that time passed on in idleness, till the lapse of time brought with it a sense of neglected duties, and then relief was again sought for *a self-accusing mind;* — in bodily feelings, which, when the stimulus ceased to act, added only to the load of self-accusation. This, Cottle, is an insanity which none but the soul's physician can cure. Unquestionably, restraint would do as much for him as it did when the Morgans tried it; but I do not see the slightest reason for believing it would be more permanent. This, too, I ought to say, that all the medical men to whom Coleridge has made his confession, have uniformly ascribed the evil, *not to* bodily disease, but indulgence. The restraint which alone could effectually cure is that which no person can impose upon him. Could he be compelled to a certain quantity of labor every day, *for his family*, the pleasure of having done it would make his heart glad, and the sane mind would make the body whole.

"I see nothing so advisable for him, as that he should come here to Greta Hall. My advice is, that he should visit T. Poole for two or three weeks, to freshen himself and recover spirits, which new scenes never fail to give him. When there, he may consult his friends at Birmingham and Liverpool on the fitness of lecturing at those two places, at each of which he has friends, and would, I should think beyond all doubt, be successful. He must be very unfortunate, if he did not raise from fifty to one hundred pounds at the two places. But whether he can do this or not, here it is that he ought to be. He knows in what manner he would be received; by his children with joy; by his wife, not with tears, if she can control them, — certainly not with reproaches; by myself only with encouragement.

"He has sources of direct emolument open to him in the Courier, and in the Eclectic Review. These for his immediate wants, and for every thing else his pen is more rapid than mine, and would be paid as well. If you agree with me, you had better write to Poole that he may press him to make a visit, which I know he has promised. His great object should be, to get out a play, and appropriate the whole produce to the support of his son Hartley, at college. Three months' pleasurable exertion would effect this. Of some such fit of industry I by no means despair; of any thing more than fits, I am afraid I do. But this, of course, I shall never say to him. From me he shall never hear aught but cheerful encouragement, and the language of hope. . . . . I hope you next will tell me that he is going to Mr. T. Poole's. I have communicated some of your letters to Mrs. Coleridge, who you know resides with us. Her spirits and health are beginning to sink under it. God bless you!

"Yours affectionately,

"Robert Southey."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cottle now proposed to raise an annuity of £ 150, to be held in trust for Coleridge, and Southey again writes to him : —

" Of sorrow and humiliation I will say nothing. Let me come at once to the point. On what grounds can such a subscription as you propose raising for Coleridge be solicited? The annuity to which your intended letter refers (£ 150) *was* given him by the Wedgwoods. Thomas, by his will, settled his portion on Coleridge, for his life. Josiah withdrew his about three years ago. The half still remaining amounts, when the income-tax is deducted, to £ 67. 10s. That sum Mrs. C. receives at present, and it is all which she receives for supporting herself, her daughter, and the two boys at school; — the boys' expenses amounting to the whole. No part of Coleridge's embarrassment arises from his wife and children, — except that he has insured his life for a thousand pounds, and pays the annual premium. He never writes to them, and never opens a letter from them!

" In truth, Cottle, his embarrassments, and his miseries, of body and mind, all arise from one accursed cause, — excess in *opium*, of which he habitually takes more than ever was known to be taken by any person before him. . . . . Perhaps you are not aware of the costliness of this drug. In the quantity which C. takes, it would consume *more* than the whole which you propose to raise. A frightful consumption of *spirits* is added. In this way bodily ailments are produced, and the wonder is that he is still alive.

" There are but two grounds on which a subscription of this nature can proceed, — either when the object is disabled from exerting himself, or when his exertions are unproductive. Coleridge is in neither of these predicaments. Proposals after proposals have been made to him by the booksellers, and he repeatedly closed with them. He is at this moment as capable of exertion as I am, and would be paid as well for whatever he might be pleased to do. There are two Reviews, the Quarterly and the Eclectic, in both of which he might have employment at ten guineas a sheet. As to the former, I could obtain it for him; in the latter, they are urgently desirous of his assistance. *He promises, and does nothing.* . . . . . Nothing is wanting to make him easy in circumstances, and happy in himself, but to leave off opium, and to direct a certain portion of his time to the discharge of *his duties.* Four hours a day would suffice." — Cottle, pp. 279, 280.

But to every plan that Southey proposed Coleridge was irreconcilably averse, and this unhappy man sank still lower in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the gulf of misery into which he had plunged. For a time he placed himself in the hands of a physician, and while under his care he wrote, — "I cannot be too grateful for the skill with which the surgeon treats me"; and again, — "It is true I am restored as much beyond my expectations almost, as my deserts." But

> "What boots it at one gate to make defence
> And at another to let in the foe?"

At this very period, instead of being restored, he was worse; for he almost daily employed himself in obtaining laudanum, without the knowledge of his physician, by actual deceit.* About this time he wrote the following letter to Mr. Wade.

"*Bristol, June 26th*, 1814.

"Dear Sir, — For I am unworthy to call any good man friend, — much less you, whose hospitality and love I have abused; accept, however, my entreaties for your forgiveness, and for your prayers.

"Conceive a poor miserable wretch, who for many years has been attempting to beat off pain by a constant recurrence to the vice which reproduces it. Conceive a spirit in hell, employed in tracing out for others the road to that heaven from which his crimes exclude him! In short, conceive whatever is most wretched, helpless, and hopeless, and you will form as tolerable a notion of my state as it is possible for a good man to have.

"I used to think the text in St. James, that 'he who offended in one point offends in all,' very harsh; but I now feel the awful, the tremendous truth of it. In the one crime of OPIUM, what crime have I not made myself guilty of! — Ingratitude to my Maker! and to my benefactors — injustice! *and unnatural cruelty to my poor children!* — self-contempt for my repeated promise-breach, nay, too often, actual falsehood!

"After my death, I earnestly entreat that a full and unqualified narration of my wretchedness, and of its guilty cause, may be made public, that at least some little good may be effected by the direful example.

"May God Almighty bless you, and have mercy on your still affectionate, and in his heart grateful S. T. COLERIDGE." †

When we consider the powers which had been bestowed on this man, and the promise of his youth, we confess, that in the records of biography we could hardly point to a more mournful picture than this.

---

* *Vide* Cottle's *Rem.*, p. 285. † *Ibid.*, p. 292.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is now another blank in Coleridge's life. His friends could do no more for him. We hear of him at length residing at Calne, with Mr. Morgan, the same friend with whom he had lived in 1812. A year passes, and we find him writing to Cottle, begging for money as an advance on poems which he promised to send him; then comes a second letter still more urgent, the last that Cottle ever received from him. From April, 1815, to April, 1816, is another unrecorded year.

On the 9th of April, 1816, a physician, Dr. Adams, wrote to Mr. Gillman of Highgate, likewise a physician by profession, telling him that a gentleman, who had for some years been in the habit of taking large quantities of opium, was desirous "to fix himself in the house of some medical gentleman, who will have courage to refuse him any laudanum, and under whose assistance, should he be the worse for it, he may be relieved," and ended by requesting Mr. Gillman to receive him into his family. Gillman was not averse to the proposition. He met Coleridge the next day, they were mutually pleased with each other, and on the 15th of April Coleridge went to Mr. Gillman's to reside. Here for eighteen years he lived, and here he died.

Of this period, considering its length, very few memorials have appeared. We know little of Mr. Gillman and his family, save the warm terms in which Coleridge was accustomed to speak of them. The single volume of Mr. Gillman's Life of Coleridge, which was published in 1838, has given us no favorable impression of its author. He writes like a special pleader ignorant of the cause he has undertaken; his style is detestable, the facts which he relates are meagre, and are often recorded with utter disregard to their chronological arrangement. We are not surprised that his promised second volume has never been published. That he became sincerely attached to Coleridge we do not doubt, but we suspect that his influence over him was at no time very great. It is true, that, within a short period of his going to reside at Highgate, the quantity of opium in which Coleridge indulged was very much diminished, and that his mind began to reassume a more healthy tone. But we believe that there is no doubt that at no subsequent period of his life was he entirely a stranger to its use for any considerable time. His letters to Alsop contain not infrequent references to suffer-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ings produced by the recent use of opium. In a letter written in 1821, he says : — "Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may not pass such another night as the last. While I am awake and retain my reasoning powers, the pang is gnawing, but I am, except for a fitful moment or two, tranquil ; it is the howling wilderness of sleep that I dread." *

The habit had been fixed too deep to be uprooted, and it seems to us that during the few years preceding 1815 his mind had sustained a shock from which it never afterward fully recovered. We are aware that this is very different from the view entertained by Coleridge himself, and by some of his friends ; but we think that our opinion is justified by the comparison of those of his works which were composed and published after 1815 with those which were written while "the dark pillar was not wholly turned."

Nor do we believe that he ever again enjoyed that peace of mind, far more to be prized than any intellectual powers, which is to be obtained only through the consciousness of having faithfully performed one's part in life ; and though at times he may have had the consciousness of heartfelt repentance, yet, underneath the momentary repose which this or some lower feeling may have given him, the memory of the past must have been ever gnawing at his breast.

> "The sad forms of scenes and deeds long past
> Blend into spectral shapes and death-like life,
> And pass in silent, stern procession ! —
> The storm is past ; — but in the pause and hush,
> Nor calm, nor tranquil joy, nor peace are mine." †

In 1816 Coleridge published his first Lay Sermon, entitled The Statesman's Manual, or the Bible the best Guide to Political Knowledge and Foresight. This was followed, in the next year, by a second volume, "addressed to the higher and middle classes on the existing distresses and discontents" ; and he proposed to write still another. In the last editions, these are associated with a little book published first in 1830, On the Constitution of the Church and State. These three publications we consider by far the least valuable that have appeared from Coleridge's pen. His life had not

---

* *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge*, p. 56.

† *Consolations of a Maniac*, by J. H. Green. See Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, Vol. II., p. 135.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fitted him to be a safe guide in matters of politics ; his mind was naturally speculative rather than practical, and from many of his views the generality of readers would entirely dissent. We do not mean to deny to him the merit of right intention in publishing these little works, or to imply that we consider that there is nothing valuable in them ; "*omnibus enim rebus, omnibusque sermonibus, aliquid salutare est.*"

In the course of 1816 and 1817, the two parts of Christabel (the second part for the first time) were published in a small volume, with Kubla Khan and the Pains of Sleep. This was shortly followed by the Biographia Literaria and the volume of poems entitled Sibylline Leaves, which contained some of his finest pieces. The Biographia Literaria had been in great part composed some years before. He intended it as a statement of his principles in politics, religion, and philosophy, and an application of the rules deduced from philosophical principles of poetry and criticism. Again, as was so often the case, he fell far short of his mark. His principles of politics and religion were but slightly touched upon, and his principles of philosophy were borrowed from Schelling, Maasz, and Fichte, without sufficient acknowledgment of the sources whence they came. Coleridge's plagiarisms in this book, and others of his works, were somewhat harshly pointed out by De Quincey and by a writer in Blackwood's Magazine, which has led Mrs. Henry N. Coleridge, in her long and rambling Introduction to the last edition of the Biographia Literaria, to enter into a defence of her father. We quote but one sentence from it ; but that one seems to cover the whole ground.

"If he was not always sufficiently considerate of other men's property, he was profuse of his own ; and in truth, such was his temper in regard to all property, of what kind soever ; he did not enough regard or value it, whether for himself or his neighbour." — *Introduction to Biographia Literaria*, p. 18.

We should, however, be inclined to believe that he set less value on property that belonged to his neighbour than on his own. The criticism on Wordsworth's poetry in the Biographia Literaria seems to us in many respects exceedingly happy, and the best portion of this most desultory book.*

* We are glad to see, that, in the last edition, Coleridge's daughter has had the good taste to omit several very objectionable passages in her father's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the autumn of 1817, Zapolya, a Christmas Tale, was composed and published. It contains passages of much beauty, but as a whole is far inferior to Remorse. During the winters of 1817 and 1818, Coleridge lectured for the last time in public. We believe that he very seldom wrote out any lectures previously to delivery, except when he was lecturing at Bristol before his marriage. This explains why nothing but fragments of his different courses are left. In the volumes of his Literary Remains "we have extracts from lectures of all dates from 1802, partly in the words of the critic's own manuscripts, partly the mere notes of his hearers; we have isolated memoranda, of which most are the writer's own, but some are only quotations; we have changes of opinion stated without being accounted for, and hints of other opinions insufficiently explained." And yet these fragments contain much that is valuable. His criticism on Shakspeare, where he does not descend to points of mere verbal conjecture, is superior to any other that we are acquainted with.

But few letters which were written during these years have since been published. The most of them are to be found in a work entitled Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, published anonymously, but understood to be by a Mr. Alsop. Alsop's own portion of the book is worthless, but the letters which he has preserved are many of them exceedingly illustrative of this period of Coleridge's life. In a letter, written in January, 1821, very remarkable for the view it gives of his state of mind and plans during this period, Coleridge says, —

"My health, I have reason to believe, is so intimately connected with the state of my spirits, and these again are so dependent on my thoughts, prospective and retrospective, that I should not doubt the being favored with a sufficiency for my noblest undertaking, had I the ease of heart requisite for the necessary abstraction of the thoughts, and such a reprieve from the goading of the immediate exigencies as might make tranquillity possible. But, alas! I know by experience (and the knowledge is not the less because the regret is not unmixed with self-blame, and the consciousness of want of exertion and fortitude) that my health will

attack on the Edinburgh Review, in retaliation for its slashing criticisms of his works, though in her own Introduction she has seen fit to rake together again the dying embers of this controversy between Jeffrey and Coleridge.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

continue to decline as long as the pain from reviewing the barrenness of the past is great in an inverse proportion to any rational anticipations of the future."

He goes on to give a very extraordinary account of the interruptions to which he was exposed, — letters from lords and ladies urging him to write reviews, letters from actors, entreaties for money, or for recommendations to publishers, &c.; he then states that he had the written materials and contents, requiring only to be put together, of a work on Shakspeare and the English Drama, which with every art of compression would amount to three volumes of five hundred pages each. In the same state with this was a Philosophical Analysis of the Genius and Works of Dante, Spenser, Milton, and other poets, in one large volume. "These two works will, I flatter myself, form a complete code of the principles of judgment and feeling applied to works of taste; and not of *poetry* only, but of poesy in all its forms, painting, statuary, music, &c." But besides these, he had, thirdly, in a state of preparation,

"The History of Philosophy considered as a Tendency of the Human Mind to exhibit the Powers of the Human Reason, to discover by its own Strength the Origin and Laws of Man and the World, from Pythagoras to Locke and Condillac. Two volumes. — IV. Letters on the Old and New Testaments, and on the Doctrine and Principles held in common by the Fathers and Founders of the Reformation, addressed to a Candidate for Holy Orders; including Advice on the Plan and Subjects of Preaching, proper to a Minister of the Establishd Church."

To the completion of these four works, he says he had literally nothing more to do than to transcribe, but from so many scraps, from the margins of books, from blank pages, that unfortunately he must be his own scribe, or they would be all but lost.

"In addition to these — of my *great work*, to the preparation of which more than twenty years of my life have been devoted, and on which my hopes of extensive and permanent utility, of fame, in the noblest sense of the word, mainly rest — . . . . . Of this work, to which all my other writings (unless I except my poems, and these I can exclude in part only) are introductory and preparative; and the result of which (if the premises be — as I, with the most tranquil assurance, am convinced they are — in-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

subvertible, the deductions legitimate, and the conclusions commensurate, and only commensurate, with both) must finally be a revolution of all that has been called *Philosophy* or Metaphysics in England and France, since the era of the commencing predominance of the mechanical system, at the restoration of our second Charles, and with this the present fashionable views, not only of religion, morals, and politics, but even of the modern physics and physiology. You will not blame the earnestness of my expressions, nor the high importance which I attach to this work; for how, with less noble objects, and less faith in their attainment, could I stand acquitted of folly, and abuse of time, talents, and learning, in a labor of three fourths of my *intellectual* life? Of this work, something more than a volume has been dictated by me, so as to exist fit for the press, to my friend and enlightened pupil, Mr. Green. . . . . And here comes, my dear friend, here comes my sorrow and my weakness, my grievance and my confession. Anxious to perform the duties of the day arising out of the wants of the day, these wants, too, presenting themselves in the most painful of all forms, — that of a debt owing to those who will not exact it, and yet need its payment, and the delay, the long (not live-long, but *death*-long) behindhand of my accounts to friends, whose utmost care and frugality on the one side, and industry on the other, the wife's management and the husband's assiduity are put in requisition to make both ends meet, — I am at once forbidden to attempt, and too perplexed earnestly to pursue, the *accomplishment* of the works worthy of me, those, I mean, above enumerated. . . . . Now I see but one possible plan of rescuing my permanent utility. It is briefly this, and plainly. For what we struggle with inwardly, we find at least easiest to *bolt out*, namely, — that of engaging from the circle of those who think respectfully and hope highly of my powers and attainments a yearly sum, for three or four years, adequate to my actual support, with such comforts and decencies of appearance as my health and habits have made necessaries, so that my mind may be unanxious as far as the present time is concerned; that thus I should stand both enabled and pledged to begin some one work of those above mentioned, and for two thirds of my whole time to devote myself to this exclusively till finished, to take the chance of its success by the best mode of publication that would involve me in no risk, then to proceed with the next, and so on till the works above mentioned, as already in full material existence, should be reduced into formal and actual being; while in the remaining third of my time I might go on maturing and completing my great work (for if but easy in mind, I have no doubt either of the reawakening power or of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the kindling inclination), and my Christabel and what else the happier hour might inspire. . . . . Now Mr. Green has offered to contribute from thirty to forty pounds yearly, for three or four years; my young friend and pupil, the son of one of my dearest old friends, fifty pounds, and I think that from ten to twenty pounds I could rely upon for another. The sum required would be about two hundred pounds, to be repaid, of course, should the disposal and sale of my writings produce the means."

The character which is shown, and the facts which appear in these extracts, might be still further illustrated by passages from other letters and writings belonging to this period. But we have no disposition to follow any farther a subject so painful.

The first edition of The Aids to Reflection was published in 1825; a work which from its desultory plan was suited to Coleridge's genius, and in which consequently his powers of thought are shown to great advantage. Our space is too narrow to allow us to enter into any remarks upon it here.

But the principal literary occupation of his later years consisted in conversation. From the time of his college life, he had been distinguished for the power and beauty of his language. To his intimate friends he would talk for hour after hour, rarely allowing them an opportunity of replying. "He one day said to Lamb, 'Charlie, did you ever hear me preach?' 'I never heard you do any thing else,' replied Lamb." Every Thursday evening there was a gathering at Highgate of disciples and friends who had come to hear Coleridge, the philosopher, discourse. There were Green and Alsop, his dearest friends and most willing pupils; there, perhaps, were Talfourd and Lockhart; and there was Henry Nelson Coleridge, who since his uncle's death has published, under the title of Table Talk, such scraps of these conversations as he had been able to note down; and there were others of less note, who had come through curiosity or admiration. There are in the fragments of these conversations the greatest inequalities. Now and then occur exquisite thoughts, beautifully expressed; now we have passages equally striking for their ignorance and arrogance. But we do not believe that such passages can give an idea of the style of his conversation, as it continued an unbroken strain for hour after hour. The only attempt at a report of one of these monologues that we have met with is in the Gentleman's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Magazine for December, 1846. It is too long for quotation in full, but we give the commencement of it.

"G—— took me to see and hear Coleridge. I was sadly disappointed in his appearance. I looked for the light of genius which had exercised such influence on his age, but I could not find it. G—— attacked him on his having said that the interview of Hector and Andromache in the 6th Iliad was a modern interpolation, and supported his argument for its authenticity very well. . . . . But Coleridge never listened in the least to more than the first words, and seemed restless till G—— had done, and he could speak himself, to tell us that we did not understand him, that in fact nobody ever did understand him, but that he would some time or other publish something which would explain every thing. 'The chief difficulty of understanding what I said about Hector and Andromache arises from the want of training in the rising generation, a want as well bodily, I may say, as mental.'"

Such are the memorials of the later years of Coleridge's life. During all this period, his family had continued to reside for the most part with Mr. Southey. They had occasionally been to see him, and in his letters he speaks with warmth of his sons. But they were not with him to minister to the wants of his premature old age. Suffering and sad, the last years of his life passed slowly away. The melancholy past was joined in his reflections with the solemn future.

Coleridge died on the 25th of July, 1834.

> "For him there is no longer any future.
> . . . . . No ominous hour
> Knocks at his door with tidings of mishap.
> Far off is he, above desire and fear;
> No more submitted to the change and chance
> Of the unsteady planets."

"By what I *have* effected am I to be judged by my fellow-men; what I *could* have done is a question for my own conscience," said Coleridge. From a view like this we entirely dissent. Every man is accountable to his fellow-men for the use which he makes of the talents which are intrusted to his charge. The greater those talents, the greater becomes his responsibility. No one has a right to say, my fellow-men shall not question me. Before the solemn tribunal of the present and the future all men must stand, and according to their works shall they be judged.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ART. VII. — *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed, Military Secretary of Washington at Cambridge; Adjutant-General of the Continental Army; Member of the Congress of the United States; and President of the Executive Council of the State of Pennsylvania.* By his Grandson, WILLIAM B. REED. Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston. 1847. 2 vols. 8vo.

MR. WILLIAM B. REED is favorably known to our readers and to the literary and general public. Among our scholars and orators he occupies a distinguished rank. Not merely by the volumes before us, but by other elegant and excellent productions, he has added to the lustre of an honored parentage and name. Several of his addresses on literary and historical occasions have been published, and are of permanent interest and value. The Discourse delivered before the New York Historical Society, in December, 1839, entitled The Infancy of the Union, conveys, in a short compass, more important instruction in illustration of our history than can be gleaned from many bulky volumes. Its object is to trace the origin and growth of the social union of the Colonies, preceding, and in fact, from the very first, preparing the way for, the political and national union which the Revolution and Federal Constitution fully developed and consummated.

Before proceeding to notice particularly the literary execution and historical value of the volumes before us, it will be proper to refresh the recollections of our readers relating to the life and character of their subject.

Joseph Reed was born in Trenton, in the then British Province of New Jersey, on the 27th of August, 1741. His family was of Irish origin and respectable standing, his father being actively engaged in commercial pursuits. No pains or expense were spared in the education of the son. He took his Bachelor's degree at Princeton College in October, 1757, delivering on the occasion an oration in Latin, which is still preserved. After pursuing the study of the law, under the care of Richard Stockton, he was admitted to the bar, in May, 1763. He immediately sailed for England, where he completed his legal education in the Middle Temple, continuing there about two years. In the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spring of 1765, he returned to America, and entered upon the practice of law in Trenton. He succeeded, in a very short time, to a large business, and attained a commanding rank in his profession. In December, 1769, his father died, and early the next spring he embarked for England, to fulfil a matrimonial engagement contracted during his residence in the Middle Temple. In May, 1770, he was married, at St. Luke's Church, in the city of London, to Esther De Berdt, daughter of Dennis De Berdt, an eminent merchant, and at one time Agent for the Province of Massachusetts Bay. On returning to America, he removed from Trenton to Philadelphia, where his talents and accomplishments commanded high professional and social distinction.

In 1772, Lord Dartmouth succeeded Lord Hillsborough as Secretary of State for the Colonies. Between Lord Dartmouth and Mr. De Berdt a personal and confidential intimacy existed, which, on the death of the latter, was continued in the person of his son. Through the agency of Mr. De Berdt, junior, a correspondence was brought about between Lord Dartmouth and Mr. Reed. On the 4th of January, 1772, Mr. Reed wrote to his brother-in-law to the following effect.

"I have often had thoughts of making his Lordship a tender of my services in pointing out some things which would be of mutual advantage to both countries, and tend to make his administration honorable and useful. But the difficulty of introducing it in a proper manner, and free from any suspicion of interested views, has hitherto prevented it. The intelligence from this country has generally flowed through such corrupt channels as would expose any minister to danger and difficulty. I think I could procure his Lordship one or two correspondents in other Provinces, who would, if it was agreeable, render him any services in that way, and who have nothing to ask from him but his cheerful acceptance of their honest and disinterested endeavours to serve both the mother country and the Colonies." — Vol. I., p. 49.

It was signified that such communications would be agreeable to his Lordship. The correspondence that ensued is exceedingly interesting and valuable. Mr. Reed's position as an active and, although quite young, a prominent asserter of Colonial rights, his sincere and earnest desire to obtain from ministerial and imperial concession the redress and securities

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which the Colonies demanded, his finished education, extensive and elevated connections, acquaintances, and correspondents in both countries, his incomparable facility and elegance of style, and the liberal, enlightened, and well-tempered tone of his spirit, qualified him to perform the delicate and responsible part on which he had ventured, of conveying to the ministry a fair and candid, a just and fearless account of the condition and progress of the controversy in the Colonies. When we consider how fully the government were apprised of the strength, extent, and depth of the popular excitement by the letters of Mr. Reed, it is more unaccountable that they persisted in the policy which finally resulted in the loss of their colonial empire in America. Indeed, their management of the dispute, and of the war to which it led, exhibits a strange blindness and fatuity. From the beginning to the end, there was what in popular parlance is sometimes called "a run of ill-luck" in the measures of the ministry, and, as the great master of human nature has observed, when the current of circumstances is adverse, reason loses its discernment, and the mind its guiding light;

"Men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes."

The first letter of Mr. Reed to Lord Dartmouth commenced thus: —

Philadelphia, December 22*d*, 1773.

"My Lord, — The present state of public affairs in this part of America so nearly affects the ease and honor of your administration, that I cannot but think it my duty on this occasion to break through the common forms which your Lordship's rank and my own respect would prescribe, and endeavour to inform you truly and faithfully of our present views and situation." — Vol. I., p. 51.

Five days afterwards he wrote again, informing him of the proceedings in Philadelphia, of the populace compelling the master of a tea-ship, when supplied by them with provisions and other necessaries for the voyage, upon two hours' notice, to return to England without starting a box of his cargo.

"As it may be of importance to your Lordship not only to be made acquainted with facts, but with the circumstances, rank, and character of those who promote this opposition, it would be improper for me to conceal that it has originated and been con-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ducted by some of the principal inhabitants, and I may safely say countenanced and encouraged by all, as there has not been a single publication, nor have I heard one person speak, in favor of the measure.

"Your Lordship will judge from these facts how general and unanimous the opinion is, that no article subject to a duty, for the purpose of raising revenue, ought to be received in America. Nor is it confined to this city; your Lordship will see by the papers herewith, that the same opposition is made at New York, Charleston, and Boston, and you may rely upon it, the same idea prevails throughout the country. Any further attempt to enforce this act, I am humbly of opinion, must end in blood. . . . . .

"Your Lordship's goodness will, I hope, excuse my pleading for the country I love. But as on the one hand I will not conceal or misrepresent, so on the other I would wish to avert the impending blow." — Vol. I., pp. 54 – 56.

On the 10th of June, 1774, he wrote as follows: —

"The engagement I have made to give your Lordship a faithful account of the transactions in this city and Province, in the distant hope that my communications may be of some use, induces me still to trouble you. My opportunities are such as no officer of government can have, and as I have the most passionate and sincere desire to see a reconciliation between the mother country and the Colonies take place, I shall continue writing until I find it disagreeable to your Lordship, hoping, I confess, that I may contribute, in some small degree, to enable your Lordship to judge with precision, and point out some mode by which these unhappy disputes may be terminated to the satisfaction of both parties. . . . . .

"Your Lordship, I think, may consider it as a fixed truth, that all the dreadful consequences of civil war will ensue before the Americans will submit to the claim of taxation by Parliament; I mention this that your Lordship may not be deluded by the suggestions of designing, interested people." — Vol. I., pp. 68 – 70.

In a letter of July 25th, he alludes to his own agency in the patriotic movements.

"Though I have had some share in the transactions in this city, I assure your Lordship it has been with reluctance, and if I could be convinced that submission to the claims of Parliament did not virtually and necessarily imply a surrender both for myself and my children of the blessings of liberty, I should have borne testimony against some of the measures pursued. I am sure I speak not only my own sentiments, but the sentiments

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the most respectable in this city, when I say that there is nothing they so much lament as these unhappy differences, and that they will rejoice to see the old union and affection restored." — Vol. I., p. 72.

A letter of September 25th exhibits the manliness of his tone, and the elevation of his principles, as a British and an American patriot.

"Your Lordship is pleased to say 'that government has no intention to enslave the people of America, but to allow them all the freedom consistent with their connection with the parent state.' If we are to be thus free, should it not have been distinguished in what instances our freedom is inconsistent with our connection, that, as reasonable beings, we might be convinced of the necessity and propriety of being less free than our brethren landholders in Britain? In my poor judgment, the declaratory law, and the acts passed respecting Boston, which are streams from the same fountain, degrade us from the scale of freedom; the former, indeed, does not agree with your Lordship's ideas of American liberty, which you think should be only partially restrained. Whereas this law is a general restraint, enacted by a power wholly independent of us, and binding us in all cases whatsoever. A gentle tyranny is no more compatible with the rights of an English subject, than a violent one." — Vol. I., p. 77.

The following description of the Congress which met in Philadelphia, September 1st, 1774, and of the state of feeling then pervading the people, takes its place as part of the record on the permanent pages of American history.

"The Congress met here on the 1st of September, consisting of delegates from all the colonies, from New Hampshire to South Carolina inclusive, in all about fifty-two. They opened the meeting with great solemnity, and chose the Speaker of Virginia their Chairman, or President. They concluded their deliberations should be secret, which rule they observed until the publication of the inclosed papers. We only know that as yet great unanimity of sentiment prevails, and that a very large committee is engaged in stating the rights of an American subject. There are among them many persons of excellent sense and great abilities. The Boston delegates, who are critically situated, act with uncommon prudence and discretion; they speak with much respect of your Lordship, and impute the loss of your protection to the misrepresentations of their enemies. But what shall I say to your Lordship of the appearances in this country? What seemed a little time since to be a spark which might with pru-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dence have been extinguished, is now a flame which threatens ruin to both the parent and the child. The spirit of the people gradually rose when it might have been expected to decline, till the Quebec Bill added fuel to the fire. Then all those deliberate measures of petitioning previous to opposition were laid aside, as inadequate to the apprehended mischief and danger, and now the people are generally ripe for any plan the Congress advise, should it be war itself. I can hardly think that I am in the same place and among the same people, so great is the alteration of sentiment. As far as I can judge, should the merchants hesitate to comply with any suspension of trade the Congress direct, the people of the country will compel them, and I know no power capable to protect them. A few days ago we were alarmed with a report that General Gage had cannonaded the town of Boston. So general a resentment, amounting even to fury, appeared everywhere, that I firmly believe, if it had not been contradicted, thousands would have gone, at their own expense, to have joined in the revenge. It was difficult to make them doubt the intelligence, or delay setting out. Those who served in the last war in the Provincial troops, others discharged from the regulars, and many who have seen service in Germany, and migrated to this country, with such others as would have joined them, would have formed from the best accounts a considerable body. I believe, had the news proved true, an army of forty thousand men, well provided with every thing except cannon, would before this have been on its march to Boston. From these appearances, and the decided language of all ranks of people, I am convinced, my Lord, that if blood be once spilled, we shall be involved in all the horrors of a civil war. Unacquainted either from history or experience with the calamities incident to such a state, with minds full of resentment at the severity of the Mother Country, and stung with the contempt with which their petitions have always been received, the Americans are determined to risk all the consequences." — Vol. I., p. 78.

The last letter to Lord Dartmouth is dated February 10th, 1775, and concludes with the following decisive sentiment: —

"This country will be deluged with blood, before it will submit to any other taxation than by their own legislature." — Vol. I., p. 95.

The current of events grew more and more rapid every hour. The war broke out, a Continental army was organized. General Washington, on his way to the camp in Cambridge, prevailed upon Mr. Reed to accompany him from Phila-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

delphia; and on the 4th of July, 1775, he was announced, in the General Orders, as Secretary to the Commander-in-chief.

No American patriot of that day had been more desirous to avoid the terrible and desperate issue of blood to which the controversy with the mother country had been brought by the obstinacy of ministers, but no one was more resolutely and deeply fixed in the determination to abide that issue, than Joseph Reed; and when he attached himself to the military family of Washington, he knew the perils of the position. In a letter to a friend he said, —

"I have no inclination to be hanged for half treason. When a subject draws his sword against his prince, he must cut his way through, if he means afterwards to sit down in safety. I have taken too active a part in what may be called the civil part of opposition, to renounce without disgrace the public cause, when it seems to lead to danger, and have a most sovereign contempt for the man who can plan measures he has not spirit to execute." — Vol. I., pp. 105, 106.

His education, talents, and energy of character were fully appreciated by Washington, and the services he rendered can be estimated only by an analysis of the correspondence conducted from head-quarters, by his aid and that of others. While Washington himself had a facility, purity, elegance, and dignity of style, which never suffered in comparison with the higher abilities of any who were associated with him at any period of his career, civil or military, he was particularly careful and skilful in the selection of the persons who were to share with him the labors of the pen. Mr. Reed from his early youth was an admirable writer, and his letters and official papers are models of their kind. In a mere literary point of view they will suffer from no criticism, but are marked with a freedom, fluency, and force rendering them interesting and instructive in the highest degree. Whatever events he described, or topics he treated, will not require to be cast into a new mould, but may be transferred at once to the use of the historian.

Indeed, it is the peculiar charm of the history of the American Revolution, that it will hereafter be invested with the interest of a drama, because it will have the form and the spirit of the drama. It will not be a narrative related by another, but a story told by the actors themselves, passing,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as it were, in very life across the stage. History in reference to most other epochs is a decoction of the lees of events and characters, selected by the arbitrary, prejudiced, and necessarily limited judgments of writers distant from the scene and the period, and boiled down into a reduced and confused compound. The filial affection and honorable ancestral pride of the descendants of the men of the Revolution, and the gratitude and enlightened patriotism of public bodies, are faithfully and busily recovering from decay and oblivion the memorials of the great actors in that struggle, and, by such publications as the one before us, are securing to them a brighter and more worthy fate. Heroes and sages are thus restored to living action, and as we read their letters, written from day to day and from hour to hour, the grand movement again and for ever passes before our eyes. Much has already been done, and much more will be done ; and when all that now slumbers in decaying manuscripts shall have received imperishable life from the press, the historian will be prepared to execute his office in a shape and with a spirit that will transcend all the forms in which genius and eloquence have heretofore attempted to perpetuate the knowledge of events. By a judicious and discriminating use of the materials thus provided, the immortal chieftain in that war of liberty, the Father of his country, and his associates in the camp and the cabinet, will enact their own parts, and the reader see and hear all that they did and suffered. The whole will be radiant with the interest which, at the time, belonged to the fearful risks, the exhausting toils, the anxious doubts, and glowing hopes, and triumphant rejoicings and plaudits, which alternately spread their clouds, and diffused their sunshine, from the beginning to the end of that long and eventful day of trial and of glory.

The Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed is an invaluable contribution to these living resources of our history. Not only does he tell his own story, and that of the Revolutionary struggle so far as he was connected with it, but he brings before us, in the same original vividness of delineation, many others of the great spirits of the day and the scene. There are letters from Generals Greene and Wayne especially, which present those two heroes and patriots to our imaginations and our hearts with an attractiveness which no description by a third person could possibly reach. Of General

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

St. Clair we had failed to receive any distinct or particularly interesting impression before; but there is one letter from him, in these volumes, which will make us love and honor his memory for ever.

During the latter part of October, 1775, Mr. Reed returned to Philadelphia. In the ensuing year he was elected to the Assembly of Pennsylvania. In May, 1776, Congress, at the express desire of General Washington, appointed him Adjutant-General, and the following extract from a letter to his wife shows the grounds of his acceptance of that office.

"You will be surprised, but I hope not dejected, when I tell you that a great revolution has happened in my prospects and views. Yesterday the General sent for me, and in a very obliging manner pressed me to accept the office of Adjutant-General, which General Gates lately filled. The proposition was new and surprising, so that I requested till this day to consider of it. I objected my want of military knowledge, but several members of Congress and the General treated it so lightly, and in short said so many things, that I have consented to go. I have been much induced to this measure by observing that this Province will be a great scene of party and contention this summer. The Courts are stopped, consequently no business done in my profession, and at all events my time so engrossed that I have not a moment to devote to keeping up my stock or adding to my law knowledge. The appointments of the office are equal to £700 per annum, which will help to support us till these calamitous times are at an end. Besides, this post is honorable, and if the issue is favorable to America, must put me on a respectable scale. Should it be otherwise, I have done enough to expose myself to ruin. I have endeavoured to act for the best, and hope you will think so." — Vol. I., p. 190.

General Reed shared actively and prominently in all the dangers, disappointments, and distresses of the ensuing campaign, from the battle of Long Island with its train of disastrous consequences, to the evacuation of New York, the skirmishes that succeeded, the battle of White Plains, the loss of Fort Washington, and the retreat through the Jerseys, — that darkest hour of the Revolution. In these and all subsequent scenes of his military experience, he proved himself a brave, active, and skilful officer. His courage rose to the height of romantic intrepidity, and eminently fitted him for perilous adventures, daring *reconnoissances*, and desperate

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

encounters. During the war, his horse was three times shot under him. One of the instances he thus relates :—

"Just after I had sealed my letter to you, and sent it away, an account came that the enemy were advancing upon us in three large columns. We have so many false reports, that I desired the General to permit me to go and discover what truth there was in the account. I went down to our most advanced post, and while talking there with the officer of the guard, the enemy's advanced guard fired upon us at about fifty yards' distance — our men behaved well, stood, and returned the fire, till, overpowered by numbers, they were obliged to retreat. The enemy advanced upon us very fast. I had not quitted the house five minutes before they were in possession of it. Finding how things were, I went over to the General to get some support for the brave fellows who had behaved so well. By the time I got there, the enemy appeared in open view and sounded their bugles in a most insulting manner, as is usual after a fox-chase. I never felt such a sensation before — it seemed to crown our disgrace. The General was prevailed upon to order out a party to attack them, and as I had been upon the ground, which no one else had, it fell to me to conduct them. . . . . In a few minutes our brave fellows mounted up the rocks, and attacked the enemy with great spirit. At the same time some of our troops, in another quarter, moved up towards the enemy, and the action began. Major Leitch fell near me, in a few minutes, with three balls through him. . . . . Colonel Knowlton, a brave Connecticut officer, also fell mortally wounded. I mounted him on my horse and brought him off. In about ten minutes, our people pressing on with great ardor, the enemy gave way and left us the ground, which was strewed pretty thick with dead, chiefly the enemy, though it since turns out our loss is also considerable. Our greatest loss is poor Knowlton, whose name and spirit ought to be immortal. I assisted him off, and when gasping in the agonies of death, all his inquiry was if we had driven in the enemy. The pursuit of a flying enemy was so new a scene, that it was with difficulty our men could be brought to retreat, which they did in very good order. We buried the dead and brought off the wounded on both sides, as far as our troops had pursued. We have since learned that the main body of the enemy was hastily advancing, so that in all probability there would have been a reverse of things, if the pursuit had not been given over.

"You can hardly conceive the change it has made in our army. The men have recovered their spirits and feel a confidence which before they had quite lost. I hope the effects will

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be lasting. You will probably hear from other quarters of the double escape I had. My own horse not being at hand when the alarm was first given, I borrowed one from a young Philadelphian. He received a shot just behind his fore-shoulder, which narrowly missed my leg. I am told he is since dead; but the greatest was from one of our own rascals, who was running away. Upon my driving him back, he presented his piece and snapped it at me at about a rod distance. I seized a musket from another soldier, and snapped at him; he had the same good luck. He has since been tried, and is now under sentence of death; but I believe I must beg him off, as after I found I could not get the gun off, I wounded him on the head, and cut off his thumb with my hanger. I suppose many persons will think it was rash and imprudent in officers of our rank to go into such an action. General Putnam, General Greene, many of the General's family, Mr. Tilghman, &c., were in it, but it was really to animate the troops, who were quite dispirited, and would not go into danger unless their officers led the way." — Vol. I., pp. 237, 238.

It was during this campaign that General Reed became embarrassed by an entanglement into which he was drawn in a correspondence with General Charles Lee, occasioned by the loss of Fort Washington. It was the opinion of many of Washington's military council that the attempt to hold that place ought not to have been made. This was the judgment, it was understood, of the Commander-in-chief himself, who was supposed to have been overruled by others, especially by the influence of General Greene. Several times during the war, at the battle of Germantown, for instance, as well as on this occasion, Washington incurred the censure of some of his associates, particularly among the younger and more inconsiderate officers, by attaching, as they thought, too much weight to the opinions of others, against his own better judgment. As, in the lapse of time, the evidence arising from the publication of original documents increases, the wisdom and greatness of Washington become vindicated. He often had reasons which the necessities of his position forbade his disclosing to any, even to his most confidential subordinates. With a sublime magnanimity, he silently endured reproach, not only from enemies, but from his nearest and most devoted friends, rather than jeopard the cause of the country by producing his justification. Reed was unhappily and imprudently ensnared into an interchange of letters with Lee, which, for a time,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exposed him to the imputation of sympathizing with the manner in which that officer censured the Commander-in-chief for having sacrificed Fort Washington and its brave garrison. An explanation shortly afterwards took place between the adjutant-general and his chief, most honorable to them both, and their former friendship and confidence were entirely restored.

The reasons which induced the Commander-in-chief to hold on to Fort Washington are thus stated by him in a letter to Reed, written a few years afterwards.

"The loss of Fort Washington, simply abstracted from the circumstances which attended it, was an event that gave me much pain, because it deprived the army of the services of many valuable men at a critical period, and the public of many valuable lives, by the cruelties which were inflicted upon them in their captive state. But this concern received additional poignancy from two considerations, which were but little known; some of them will never be known to the world, because I shall never attempt to palliate my own foibles by exposing the error of another; nor indeed could either of them come before the public, unless there had been such a charge as must have rendered an inquiry into the causes of this miscarriage necessary. The one was a non-compliance in General Greene with an order sent to him from White Plains, before I marched for the western side of Hudson's River, to withdraw the artillery and stores from the Fort; allowing him, however, some latitude for the exercise of his own judgment, as he was upon the spot, and could decide better, from appearances and circumstances, than I, the propriety of a total evacuation. The other was a Resolve of Congress, in these emphatical words: 'October 11th, 1776. — Resolved: That General Washington be desired, if it be practicable, by every art, and at whatever expense, to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River, between Fort Washington and Mount Constitution, as well to prevent the regress of the enemy's frigates lately gone up, as to hinder them from receiving succour.'

"When I came to Fort Lee, and found no measures taken towards an evacuation, in consequence of the order before mentioned; when I found General Greene, of whose judgment and candor I entertained a good opinion, decidedly opposed to it; when I found other opinions coincident with his; when the wishes of Congress to obstruct the navigation of the North River, which were delivered in such forcible terms to me, recurred; when I knew that the easy communication between the different

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parts of the army, then separated by the river, depended upon it; and, lastly, when I considered that our policy led us to waste the campaign without coming to a general action on the one hand, or suffering the enemy to overrun the country on the other, I conceived that every impediment which stood in their way was a means to answer these purposes; and when thrown into the scale with those opinions, which were opposed to an evacuation, caused that warfare in my mind, and hesitation, which ended in the loss of the garrison; and, being repugnant to my own judgment of the advisableness of attempting to hold the post, filled me with the greater regret. The two great causes, which led to this misfortune, and which I have before recited, as well perhaps as my reasoning upon it, which occasioned the delay, being concealed from public view, of course left the field of censure quite open for any and every laborer, who inclined to work in it; and afforded a fine theme for the pen of a malignant writer who is always less regardful of facts than the point he wants to establish, where he has the field wholly to himself, where concealment of a few circumstances will answer his purpose, or where a small transposition of them will give a very different complexion to the same transaction." — Vol. I., pp. 263, 264.

It is due to General Reed to observe, that, whatever he may have written or said to Lee or others, it could not have been in stronger or plainer terms than he used to Washington himself. The following passages are from a letter, dated December 22d, 1776, just before the glorious affair at Trenton, by which the dying hopes of America were revived, and an impression made that secured the final triumph of the cause. Washington was already, it is believed, meditating the enterprise, which, four nights afterwards, he carried into effect with a heroism and energy never surpassed.

"We are all of opinion, my dear General, that something must be attempted to revive our expiring credit, give our cause some degree of reputation, and prevent a total depreciation of the Continental money, which is coming on very fast; that even a failure cannot be more fatal, than to remain in our present situation; in short, some enterprise must be undertaken in our present circumstances, or we must give up the cause. In a little time the Continental army will be dissolved. The militia must be taken before their spirits and patience are exhausted; and the scattered, divided state of the enemy affords us a fair opportunity

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of trying what our men will do, when called to an offensive attack. Will it not be possible, my dear General, for your troops, or such part of them as can act with advantage, to make a diversion, or something more, at or about Trenton? . . . . .

"*Allow me to hope that you will consult your own good judgment and spirit, and not let the goodness of your heart subject you to the influence of opinions from men in every respect your inferiors.* . . . . . I will not disguise my own sentiments, that our cause is desperate and hopeless, if we do not take the opportunity of the collection of troops at present, to strike some stroke. Our affairs are hastening fast to ruin if we do not retrieve them by some happy event. Delay with us is now equal to a total defeat. Be not deceived, my dear General, with small, flattering appearances; we must not suffer ourselves to be lulled into security and inaction, because the enemy does not cross the river. It is but a reprieve; the execution is the more certain, for I am very clear that they can and will cross the river, in spite of any opposition we can give them.

"Pardon the freedom I have used. The love of my country, a wife and four children in the enemy's hands, the respect and attachment I have to you, the ruin and poverty that must attend me and thousands of others, will plead my excuse for so much freedom." — Vol. I., pp. 272, 273.

Immediately upon receiving the letter which contained these remarkable passages, Washington sent for Reed, and communicated to him the outlines of the contemplated attack on Trenton. The language we have quoted, particularly that in Italics, demonstrates the frankness and faithfulness of the writer, and the fact that it was kindly and respectfully received illustrates the true greatness of him to whom it was addressed. In the consultations, *reconnoissances*, and gallant achievements connected with the battles of Trenton and Princeton, General Reed bore an important and conspicuous part.

On the 12th of May, 1777, he was elected by Congress a brigadier-general, and it was designed to commit to him the command of the entire cavalry forces of the army; but he declined the appointment, as he did also, about the same time, that of Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, his nomination having been the first made under the new government of that State. He had previously resigned the office of adjutant-general, in which he was succeeded by Timothy Pickering. Ever after this he declined all permanent appointments in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

army, but served, wherever danger threatened or opportunities of usefulness offered, as a volunteer. On the 14th of September, 1777, he was elected by the Pennsylvania Assembly a delegate to Congress.

In the summer of 1778, Lord Carlisle, Mr. Eden, and Governor Johnstone arrived, with conciliatory propositions from the mother country. Whatever might have been the effect, at an earlier stage of the conflict, and under more favorable circumstances, of the concessions and assurances then offered, the measure was utterly baffled, and involved in irretrievable and exasperating failure, by an attempt, on the part of one of the British commissioners, to employ bribery. Governor Johnstone, through the agency of a Mrs. Ferguson, a mutual acquaintance, proposed to General Reed inducements of personal and private advantage. He was offered ten thousand guineas, and any office in British America. The answer, instantly and indignantly made to the glittering but base proposal, will carry down the name of Joseph Reed with the brightest lustre to all future ages: — "*I am not worth purchasing, but such as I am, the king of Great Britain is not rich enough to buy me.*"

On the 1st of December, 1778, he was unanimously chosen by the Assembly of Pennsylvania President of that State, in which office he was continued by annual reëlection as long as the constitutional limit allowed, until December, 1781. No one, who does not study the evidence contained in this work, can estimate the importance to the American cause of the services rendered during these years by President Reed. Pennsylvania, besides being more than any other State the centre and heart of the war, was particularly embarrassed and distressed by peculiar social and local difficulties. Evils arising from its proprietary institutions, and, for political and military purposes, the unmanageable character and notions of a large part of its population, placed obstacles in the way of administering its government and drawing out its resources. The Tory portion of its population, very considerable in numbers, and still more so in influence, artfully fomented and effectually aggravated its internal political dissensions, too often turning the hands and hearts of the friends of liberty against each other. To complete the mischief, Arnold was in command at Philadelphia, and at the same time secretly in traitorous correspondence

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the enemy. President Reed, although not then dreaming any more than others of this treason, had the sagacity to discern the profligacy of his character, and encountered all the opposition which his active and powerful malignity could excite. Arnold exerted a disastrous influence in Congress, and to some extent succeeded in casting a shadow between the President of Pennsylvania and the Commander-in-chief. But when, at last, the whole depth of the traitor's depravity was disclosed, justice was done to the patriotic penetration and energy of those who had boldly and faithfully resisted his arbitrary deportment and endeavoured to check his profligate career.

The term of office of President Reed extended beyond the active military struggles of the Revolution, and the services he rendered cannot be overestimated. The following summary gives but a faint idea of his toils and trials.

"Thus was the Chief Magistrate of the State, in these times of varied responsibility, directing legislation, administering an active executive trust, presiding in the highest court of justice, superintending the recruiting service and the discipline of militia troops, — occasionally, as will be seen, taking the command in person, and leading them to the field, — and all this amidst the fury of party conflict, and in the agony of a civil and an Indian war. Little, indeed, is it to be wondered at that the overtasked spirit broke at last under the burden; for at this time, it must be remembered, that Mr. Reed was not forty years of age. Five years later, he was in his grave." — Vol. II., p. 178.

After the war, in the hope of recruiting his exhausted strength, and arresting his declining health, he visited England; but it was too late. The following is the inscription over his tomb.

"In memory
Of the virtues, talents, and eminent services of
General Joseph Reed.
Born in the State of New Jersey
On the 27th August, 1741,
He devoted himself to the pursuit of knowledge,
And early engaged in the study of the law;
By his erudition, learning, and eloquence,
He soon rose to the highest eminence at the bar;
But at the call of his country,
Forsaking all private pursuits, he followed her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Standard to the field of battle,
And by his wisdom in council and conduct in action
Essentially promoted the Revolution in America.
Distinguished by his many public virtues,
He was, on the 1st December, 1778, unanimously elected
President of this State.
Amidst the most difficult and trying scenes, his administration
Exhibited disinterested zeal, firmness, and decision.
In private life,
Accomplished in his manners, pure in his morals,
Fervent and faithful in all his attachments,
He was beloved and admired.
On the 5th of March, 1785,
Too soon for his country and his friends, he closed
A life, active, useful, and glorious."

— Vol. II., p 416.

Mrs. Reed died in September, 1780. Her loss was irreparable, and, coöperating with the pressure and burden of public cares and patriotic solicitudes, hastened his own descent into the grave. The last child of General Reed, born May 26th, 1780, was named George Washington. Largely as we have already drawn upon the work before us, we cannot refrain from making the following extract. We wish to insert upon our pages an example of heroism and self-devotion, which must be allowed to be one of the brightest and most truly glorious passages in the naval annals of our country.

"In General Washington's letter of the 4th of June, he thanked Mr. Reed for naming after him 'The Young Christian.' This was George Washington Reed, whose brief career, so far as it was public, is not without interest. He was thoroughly educated, and, after being graduated at Princeton College, in 1798, entered the navy of the United States, as a midshipman. He was soon promoted, and in 1803 was lieutenant of the Nautilus schooner, under the command of Richard Somers, and attached to Preble's squadron, before Tripoli. Lieutenant Reed was in command of the Nautilus in the attack of the 28th of August, and is referred to with high praise by the Commodore in his official account of that affair. On the night of the 4th of September, Somers undertook the perilous enterprise of entering the harbour of Tripoli, on board the fire-ketch Intrepid. Its mysterious and fatal result is well known.

"'It was eight o'clock,' says the biographer of Somers, 'in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the evening, before the Intrepid lifted her anchor; the Argus, Vixen, Nautilus, weighing, and standing in, in company. The night was sufficiently advanced to cover the movement, and all four vessels stood towards the rocks, under their canvas. The last person who left the ketch was Lieutenant Washington Reed, then first of the Nautilus. This officer did not quit his Commander, until it was thought necessary for him to rejoin the vessel of which he was now in charge. When he went over the side of the Intrepid, all communication between the gallant spirits she contained, and the rest of the world, ceased. At that time every thing seemed propitious; Somers was cheerful, though calm; and perfect order and method prevailed in the little craft. The leave-taking was affectionate and serious with the officers, though the common men appeared to be in high spirits. This was about 9, P. M. The Argus and Vixen lay off at a little distance from the rocks to attack the galleys or gun-boats, should either attempt to follow the party out in their retreat, while the Nautilus shortened sail, and accompanied the ketch, as close in as was deemed prudent, with the especial intention of bringing off the boats. Lieutenant Reed directed the present Commodore Ridgely, then one of the Nautilus's midshipmen, to watch the ketch's movements, with a night-glass; and as this order was strictly complied with, it is almost certain that this officer was the last person of the American squadron who saw the vessel. She seemed to be advancing slowly.' In a few minutes later, the ketch exploded under the batteries of Tripoli, and the fate of Somers and the gallant crew was darkened for ever. Somers, Decatur, Reed, and Stewart, the actors and anxious spectators of the doings of that night, were Philadelphia sailors. But one of them now survives.

"Lieutenant Reed accompanied General Eaton's detachment to the coast of Africa, and served on board the vessel which co-operated with him on that romantic expedition.

"When war was declared against England, Mr. Reed having then been promoted to the grade of Commander, though in extremely delicate health, solicited active service and took command of the Vixen brig-of-war of 12 guns, then fitting for sea in one of our eastern ports. Whilst on a cruise in the West Indies, the Vixen was captured by the Southampton frigate of 32 guns, commanded by Sir James Lucas Yeo. On the night of the capture, both vessels, being under heavy press of sail, were almost simultaneously wrecked on one of the Bahama keys. The Vixen sank so rapidly, that the prize crew barely had time to save their lives; the American prisoners having been previously transferred to the Southampton. On board the frigate, a scene

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of great disorder occurred; the British sailors broke into the spirit-room, and defied all control on the part of their officers, and it was only by the aid of the American prisoners, officers and men, that the mutiny was suppressed.

"On arriving at Jamaica, Sir James Yeo publicly returned thanks for the assistance thus rendered, and at once offered Captain Reed his parole. This was declined, on the ground that he would under no circumstances leave his officers and crew, among whom the disease of the climate had already made its appearance, and over whom their commander, himself destined to be its earliest victim, watched with the most affectionate solicitude. Every day, in all the extremity of the climate, he repaired from Spanishtown to Kingston, to be with and relieve the wants of his men. The exposure soon produced its ordinary results, and he was attacked by a tropical fever. His constitution, never very robust, soon yielded, and on the 4th of January, 1813, he died at the early age of thirty-three." — Vol. II., pp. 230–232.

We do not overstate the value of these volumes, but indicate their peculiar excellence, when we say that they will be perused with greater interest in proportion to the previous amount of information the reader may possess of the Revolutionary era; and if he is wholly ignorant of the events and characters belonging to it, they are, perhaps, of all others, what we should first place in his hands. The biographer has shown equal wisdom and modesty in allowing his hero and those associated with him to occupy the stage, not appearing himself but at infrequent intervals and for brief periods, where connecting links and explanatory remarks are needed to sustain and illustrate the narrative.

Much that we had intended to reserve to the conclusion, commendatory of the work and of its preëminent historical interest and value, has been incidentally anticipated in the notice we have compiled from it of the life and character of its subject. There is but one point upon which we would suggest a criticism upon the composition of these volumes. It is a criticism to which several recent works, of the highest value in all other respects, are open. In the notes and in the body of the work, passages are introduced in foreign languages, and unaccompanied by translations. For this practice we can imagine no recommendations, while objections to it are obvious and great. It surely cannot be designed or desired to limit the readers of valuable works to that class

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of persons who are familiar with other languages than their own. Sometimes, where questions of construction may occur, or any circumstances attach importance or interest especially to the mere phraseology of a passage or document, it may be proper to give it in the original; but even then a translation might well accompany it. Foreigners, who read the work at all in its English dress, of course are not particularly accommodated by a sentence here and there in their own language, while the vast majority of readers are disappointed and provoked by being excluded from instruction and entertainment, often at points where their curiosity is most excited, and by having the current of their thoughts suddenly intercepted by barriers they cannot break through. It becomes, in effect, a sort of discourtesy on the part of the writer to the great bulk of his readers. We would promote to any practicable extent the study of the modern and the ancient languages, but must protest against excluding from the full enjoyment of our own literature all who have not the means of becoming familiar with them. To mix up in our best books French and Spanish, German and Italian, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, or any other languages, is a violation of the *dignity of our own tongue*. The English language is destined to spread over both hemispheres, and has a surer prospect of ultimately becoming universal than any ever uttered by man. The world-embracing conquests and dependencies of Great Britain have given it prevalence in a large portion of the older continents, and the northern latitudes of this. It is advancing over America with the expanding boundaries of our Union. The commerce, navigation, enterprise, philanthropy, and superior political institutions of the two leading nations of the earth, occupying a controlling position on each side of the globe, are carrying it to all the islands of the sea, and extending it along all shores. We may confidently believe that the literature it bears on its bosom will find continually multiplying readers in all lands. Let our writers be just to its claims and its dignity; and let them be just to themselves, by securing to the widest extent the field it is thus ever opening and expanding before them.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ART. VIII. — 1. *Over-Population and its Remedy; or an Inquiry into the Extent and Causes of the Distress prevailing among the Laboring Classes of the British Islands, and into the Means of remedying it.* By WILLIAM THOMAS THORNTON. London: Longmans. 1846. 8vo. pp. 446.

2. *National Distress, its Causes and Remedies.* By SAMUEL LAING, JR., ESQ., late Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. London: Longmans. 1844. 8vo. pp. 169.

3. *The Political Economy of a Famine:* an Article in the North British Review for May, 1847.

DURING the present year, the sympathies of the people of this country have been awakened to a painful extent by the sufferings of the people of Ireland and Scotland. There is something peculiarly horrible in the idea of death by starvation; it is the most appalling form in which the "king of terrors" can appear. All other trials, all possible phases and effects of destitution and misery, must be endured and exhausted, before this awful calamity comes to close the scene. And when we were told that in the land of our fathers there were millions who were suffering from lack of food, and thousands who were actually perishing every week from hunger, every man's heart was thrilled within him, and a noble, a universal effort was spontaneously made throughout the land to send succour to the distressed. It is no subject of national boasting, no cause for pride, that the contribution for this purpose was so large; amounting to at least half a million of dollars, and capable, therefore, when invested in corn and flour, of rescuing a hundred thousand beings from starvation until another harvest could be gathered in, it was still inferior to our means and our duty, and was not a tithe of what was needed in order fully to stay the progress of the destroyer. In modern times, a general famine in a civilized country is a rare, if not an unprecedented event; we had almost come to believe that the march of civilization, the extension of trade, the facilities of transport, and the consequent ease of supplying the failure of the crops in one country by the superabundance of the harvest in another, had made a recurrence of such a calamity impossible. And if

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we take the word *famine* in its original sense, meaning an absolute deficiency of food and an impossibility of obtaining it on any terms, like that which is suffered by the garrison of a besieged town or by the crew of a wrecked ship, this is true. It is not in the scheme of Providence, as hitherto revealed to man, that harvests should fail all the world over at the same time, or even for the failure to be so general that the aggregate product should not suffice — perhaps with some scrimping and some hardship — for the aggregate want. A semi-barbarous nation in the far East, or the population of a little island separated in every direction by thousands of sea miles from any continent, may suffer from a famine, properly so called, before the arm of Christian Europe or America can be stretched out to the rescue. But no civilized nation, either in the Old or New World, fears lest some blight or drought should suddenly leave a great portion of the people absolutely without food; its fields may be unfruitful for a single season, but in such case it looks with well-founded confidence to its neighbours, and even to remote parts of the earth, for a supply.

How comes it, then, that one half of the whole population of Ireland, and perhaps one sixth of that of Scotland, have been suffering the cruel pangs of hunger for a twelvemonth, and that hundreds of thousands of them during this time have actually died of starvation? The bounty of Providence has not failed; ship-loads of corn have been turned away from their shores for want of a market. The granaries of the two islands have been filled to overflowing, not indeed from the products of their own harvests, but from the immense supplies poured into them by our ever-teeming land. Flour and meal became a drug in the English market before a sheaf of this year's wheat was cut, and many dealers in grain were bankrupted by the consequent sudden reduction of prices. If the stock of provisions in the British isles had been equally distributed among the people, not a man, woman, or child would have suffered from hunger for a single hour. The fate of the Irish and Scotch appears the more terrible, because *they have starved in the midst of plenty.* They have died, not because the fields were cursed with barrenness, but because they had not wherewithal to buy food. The price of breadstuffs did not become more than double its average in ordinary years, did not rise so high by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one third as in 1800 and 1801 ; and in those years, though there was scarcity, there was no famine ; the sufferings of the poor were increased, but there was no general starvation. The present year has witnessed a frightful anomaly, which will long be remembered as a disgrace to modern civilization, — *a famine of which poverty was almost the sole cause.*

Yet Great Britain, as a nation, is the most opulent of any on the face of the globe, and inferior to none in moral and intellectual culture, in philanthropy, in the sense of justice, in all the qualities and arts that sustain and dignify human life. Her people were not wanting in generous effort to relieve the terrible suffering of Ireland and Scotland. The contributions made by individuals were large, though not so great as in the United States, for the calamity was viewed, and justly too, as a national one, too great to be stayed by private effort, and therefore requiring the interposition of government ; Parliament accepted the responsibility, and made a noble grant of eight millions sterling to assist the sufferers. The question with all classes was not *how much* should be given, but only *in what manner*, so as most effectually to check the evil. The problem as thus presented was by no means a simple one, for there was great risk lest an injudicious application of bounty should only increase the calamity, or tend to make it permanent. If private dealers had been forced to suspend their business because the government gave away food without stint, the sphere of misery would only have been enlarged, or the evil rendered one of annual recurrence. There was great discussion, therefore, on this point, but no one questioned the propriety of affording instant relief in some form, and to any extent that might be needed. Few persons are hard-hearted enough to count the cost of relief, when their neighbours are actually dying of hunger.

How is it, then, we ask again, that with no difficulty in procuring food, and no lack of wealth or generosity in the nation at large, this terrible famine has happened? The answer that must be given is a startling one, but it is so well supported by a cloud of evidence from all quarters, that it would be idle to question its accuracy. It is, that the bulk of the laboring population of Ireland, even in their best estate, — in ordinary years, when crops are abundant, and there is no pressure or distress in the commercial or manufacturing world, no stoppage of industry from any unusual

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cause, — are but one degree removed from starvation. They have nothing to fall back upon; no retrenchment is possible, no greater degree of privation can be endured. Of course, a comparatively slight cause, an insignificant diminution of one article of the harvest, a rot in the potato-fields, cuts the slender thread which is their sole support, and millions are in danger of perishing with hunger. The amount of absolute destitution thus produced is great, seemingly out of all proportion with the circumstance to which it is immediately to be attributed. To adopt an illustration which was used some twenty years ago, in discussing a question of political economy,* this unhappy people may be regarded figuratively as clinging to the sides of an immense precipice, with but one support, corresponding to the smallest quantity of potatoes that can maintain life, to save them from falling into the abyss of starvation which yawns beneath. Narrow the ledge on which they stand by the fraction of an inch, and they can no longer retain their foothold. And the number of those who are in this frightful position is so great, that no human power seems able to rescue them from the danger, and to give them a broader hold upon life. Every year, every day, the weakened sinews or crumbling supports of some poor wretches give way, and they fall almost unnoticed into the gulf.

Ireland is not the only sufferer; many of the people of Scotland are no better off, and the manufacturing and agricultural poor of England are rapidly sinking to the same level. The multitude in this wretched condition increases every day, not only according to the natural growth of population, but in its proportion to the aggregate of all classes. Children are born to be as miserable as their parents, and individuals are constantly falling from one degree of poverty to another, till they reach this lowest stage. Property tends faster and faster to accumulate in a few hands; the gains that are made, and they are enormous, are for these few; the losses, the destitution and misery, are for the million. Disposable capital and labor both increase in Great Britain much faster than is needed; the former is sent in vast amounts to foreign countries in search of employment; the latter is less easily exported, and an immense surplus of it remains at home. It was long ago remarked, that man is the least transportable

* *North American Review* for July, 1827, p. 117.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kind of luggage. Labor is the only article the supply of which seems to increase without any reference to the demand. Its price therefore tends constantly to fall, competition acting on it with the accelerating force of gravity on a falling body; it is miserably paid at the best, and much of it can find no employment whatever. It often will not command any price, and he who has nothing else to offer must consequently beg or starve.

We do not by any means attribute the miseries of Ireland to the superabundance of her population. There are nearly fourteen millions of acres of cultivated land in the island, besides six millions more, which are now uncultivated, but of which more than one half might be reclaimed; making an aggregate that, under the most skilful husbandry, would support a population at least three times as great as the present one. The population now exceeds eight millions, having doubled since 1791, and quadrupled since 1750; the misery of the people is great enough, but it surely has not increased in any thing like this proportion. Probably they were almost as badly off half a century ago as they are at the present day; the evil is greater now simply because there are more to suffer, and the difficulty of finding adequate remedies for their misery is proportionally increased. Besides, Ireland now raises more food than is necessary for her sustenance, and exports annually vast quantities of provisions to England; and, as if for the express purpose of confuting the Malthusians, these exports rapidly increase from year to year. The export of cereal grains, chiefly oats, and of other edible products of the soil, steadily increased from less than one million of quarters in 1817 to three millions and a half in 1838. The exportation of beef, pork, butter, and other animal products, has also gone on increasing, though in a lower ratio. The distress, then, is not caused by the growth of the population, and emigration alone must be a very inefficient remedy. With the present tendency to increase, at least one hundred and thirty thousand souls must remove annually, in order only to keep the population stationary, and to confine suffering within its present limits. Suppose vastly more should be done, and four millions of persons should emigrate at once; the population of the island would then only be carried back to the point where it was in 1791, and if nothing else were accomplished, the remainder of the people would

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be as destitute now as they were then. It is idle, therefore, to talk of emigration alone as a cure for all the ills that Ireland is heir to, or of over-population as the only source of her miseries.

Still, — and this is our only reason for alluding to the subject of population here, — with the increase of numbers the sphere of misery is certainly enlarged, and relief becomes more hopeless. If the population should double in the next half-century as it has done in the fifty years that are past, there will then be sixteen millions of people to care for, and from one half to three fourths of these in a state of such destitution, that a slight circumstance, a partial failure of the crops, will place them in imminent peril of starvation. The famine of this year may be repeated after a short interval, — is almost sure to recur, if any accident should enhance the price of the staple article of provision, whatever it may be, which is the sole reliance of the bulk of the people; for, we repeat it, it is not the absolute scarcity of food, but the entire want of means to purchase it, which is the evil to be dreaded. Here is the cloud which darkens all the future for Great Britain, not only fearfully large and black at the present moment, but constantly swelling and covering a still larger portion of the heavens with gloom. Already it has once broken in a tempest that has desolated Ireland and a large part of Scotland in its fury. And there is no clearing up after the storm; the sky still lowers, the skirts of the cloud are advancing, and the thunder mutters at no great distance in the ears of England. To speak without metaphor, this "condition-of-England question," as it is called, is the one subject which, for the people to whom it relates, transcends all others in importance, and demands instant and anxious attention, with a fearful penalty for neglect. While it remains unsettled, all signs of national prosperity are factitious and deceitful; they no more evince the absence of danger than does the hectic glow on the cheek of a consumptive patient. They only herald approaching dissolution.

Before attempting to review the causes and consequences of this national distress, it may be necessary to produce some evidence as to its nature and extent. Those who have not attended to the subject may deem the existence of such a state of things incredible, and demand to be satisfied about the facts before they enter the boundless field of spec-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ulation respecting their character and tendency. The proofs lie before us in such abundance, in the reports of commissions of inquiry made to Parliament, in travellers' accounts, in the works of statisticians and political economists, that the only difficulty consists in making a selection or summary which shall afford matter enough for conviction, and be brief enough for our narrow limits. Two of the writers now under review have labored upon this task of compression, but each of them had a book to fill, while we have but an article. We must be satisfied, then, with giving specimens rather than a summary of the evidence, and with referring our readers to Laing and Thornton for more complete, though succinct, statements. Let us look first to Ireland as affording a full picture of that extreme state of destitution and misery, that farthest limit on this side of actual starvation, to which, as we shall afterwards show, the laboring poor of Scotland and England are fast approaching. It is not necessary to harrow up the feelings of our readers with the details of the famine of the present year; it will be enough to exhibit the state of things which caused that famine.

According to the Irish census of 1841, which was taken with extraordinary pains and minuteness, and is entirely trustworthy, the whole number of families in Ireland is 1,472,787, of whom nearly *two thirds* are chiefly employed in agriculture. There are 1,126,050 males over fifteen years of age, who are classed as agricultural servants and laborers, forming nearly one half the whole number of males of this age on the island. Besides these, 306,915 families cultivate farms not exceeding five acres each, many of them indeed comprising but one acre, and these small farmers, as we shall see, are nearly as wretched as the ordinary day-laborers. Those who hire less than one acre are reckoned as day-laborers. It is obvious that the agricultural population is excessive, only 352,016 families being chiefly engaged in manufactures and trade. England has nearly twice as much arable land as Ireland; in the former country, only about 760,000 families are engaged in the tillage of 25,632,000 acres, while in the latter 974,188 families cultivate 13,838,782 acres. Adding the wives and children of the day-laborers and of those who hire farms not exceeding five acres, we have not less than five millions of persons,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or nearly five eighths of the whole population, constituting the class of the agricultural poor. To these must be added at least another million of poor among the civic population, and those in the country engaged chiefly in manufacture and trade. These six millions would all be considered, according to the standard of wages and living in the United States, as very poor; but as it is estimated by the best authorities, that *only* one half of the Irish population subsist chiefly or entirely upon potatoes, the number of those who cannot fall to a lower stage of destitution than that which they occupy at present may be safely stated at four millions.

The excess of the rural population, in comparison with the civic, is one great cause of the wretchedness of the small farmers. Unable to obtain work, the laborers strive to hire land, and their competition, by extravagantly raising the rent, brings the petty farmers nearly to their own level. *Rack-rent* is a new word which Ireland has added to the English language, to denote the excessive rent which the land-owner wrests by torture, as it were, from the poor cultivator. Any price that is asked will be given, and to secure the payment of it, the crops are not permitted to leave the ground till the demands of the landlord are satisfied. "The rent of *conacre* land," says Mr. Thornton, "ranges from £4 to £10 [or from 20 to 50 dollars] an acre." This term is given to the small plots of ground which are hired by agricultural laborers to be planted with potatoes. They are commonly held under one of the larger farmers, the rent being paid sometimes in manure, and sometimes in labor. For the cabin attached a rent of seven or eight dollars a year is paid. The system of underletting is carried to a great extent in Ireland, three or four "middlemen" often intervening at successive stages between the land-owner and the actual cultivator of the soil. The failure of either one of these may cause the single pig, the last resource, of the poor tenant to be seized for rent which he had already paid to his immediate landlord. Occupants of larger farms are obliged to employ laborers at the lowest wages, and sometimes to defer the work of harvest for a long time from want of money to pay them. The excessive rent which the farmer pays deprives him of the power of properly manuring his land, or observing a due rotation of crops, so that the soil is every year deteriorated,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the fences and buildings fall into decay. Numbers of them every year fail to meet their engagements, and are consequently deprived of their holdings, and sink into the next lower class, the number in which constantly increases as they go down in the scale, till they reach that in which further degradation is impossible.

About two dollars a week are considered in England as the *minimum* of wages that can support a laborer with his family, and even at this point the hardship which he must endure is excessive. But the Irish laborers seldom earn more than one dollar a week, and for a large portion of the year cannot find employment even at that price. They flock in multitudes to the towns, or to England at harvest time, seeking a pittance that may prevent them from being turned away from the cabin and potato-patch, which alone can shield them from starvation. While they are gone, their wives and children wander about the country as beggars, often relieved by those who have nothing but potatoes for themselves. The people in the north of Ireland, it is often remarked, are less miserable than those in the middle districts and the south; but work cannot be obtained even by them for many months of the year. In winter they are hardly ever employed; but their little crop of potatoes is then just gathered in, and they are able to subsist till spring. In the summer they are again out of work, and, their potatoes being now exhausted, they are compelled to beg or starve, unless they can go to England or the neighbouring counties during the harvest. Many of them pick up shell-fish or weeds for food when their potatoes fail, and thus live on, always hoping "that times may mend, and that their landlords, sooner or later, will do something for them."

Throughout Leinster, the greater part of the laborers are wholly out of work during the six months of summer and winter; spring and autumn alone afford employment at miserable wages. At one place in Carlow, the Commissioners of Inquiry in 1834 were told that five hundred men were unemployed, many of whom could not obtain two days' work in a month; at another place, out of fifty who applied for employment, only ten succeeded in getting it. In Longford, a fourth part of the laborers had nothing to do from September to March, and again from the first of June to the middle of August. As wages at the busiest time were

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not more than twenty cents a day, a laborer could lay by nothing for the months of compulsory idleness. How, then, can he live? He has usually a bit of land, often not more than a rood, for which he pays an excessive rent, and from which he may obtain nine barrels of potatoes. On these he subsists during the winter. In summer they beg or borrow, — "Faith," said one man, "there 's but little chance of our paying it back"; — or they gather "pressagh," a weed resembling Scotch kale, and upon this and boiled nettles they frequently live for days together. When such food disgusts, or cannot be found, they try to "kill the hunger with water," or "stifle" it by lying abed all day. In many instances, the Commissioners were told of persons who had repeatedly gone without food for twenty-four or forty-eight hours. Some eat up their seed-potatoes, or grub up the young potatoes when they are no bigger than marbles, and as unfit to eat from their quality as their size.

In Munster, things are still worse; the population is more dense, and competition is more eager both for employment and land. In two parishes, containing four hundred and ninety laborers dependent on occasional employment, it was found that the average quantity of work obtained by each sufficed only for three or four months in the year. Their clothes become rags before their term of service is expired, and the wearer is not only ashamed to attend chapel, but in severe weather he is sometimes obliged to leave work, because no longer able to bear the cold when half naked. Half of the cabins contain no bedstead, but their inmates lie on straw spread on the ground, without blankets or any other covering.

It is in Connaught, however, that we find the most striking picture of Irish destitution and misery in the most hopeless and aggravated form. It is "the lower deep" of suffering, which cannot be paralleled in any other district of this afflicted island. In the county of Mayo, out of about 46,000 farms, 44,000 are under fifteen acres, and are held by men who are obliged to do their own work, being too poor to hire laborers. Yet the county swarms with laborers who can seldom get employment one day out of four; there are 67,000 of them in this wretched condition. Most of them hire a potato-patch of the small farmers, or occupy some of the waste ground which they are allowed to hold

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rent-free for a year or two, till they have made it worth paying rent for. When they have planted their potatoes, they set off to roam the country, beginning to beg only when at a distance from home; or if they can obtain a few shillings to pay their passage, they cross over to England in search of work. If in this way they can get money enough to pay for the seed which they obtained on credit, and for the rent of the land, they can live during the winter on the potatoes which they have raised; otherwise, their crop is seized, and they must beg during the winter also. They plant only the "lumper" potatoes, which are raised easily and in larger quantities than the other sorts, but are soft, watery, and unwholesome, so that even pigs do not thrive on them. These are often dug while yet small, and eaten with noxious weeds and other disgusting food. In summer, which is always the period of greatest suffering, men may be seen lying in the ditches from weakness, or working on the bog when so enfeebled by hunger that they can hardly raise the sods. A German traveller, J. G. Kohl, gives the following account of the habitations of these poor wretches.

"In the west of Ireland, there are districts where a man may imagine himself in a wilderness abandoned by mankind, where nothing is to be seen but rocks, bogs, and brushwood, and where wild beasts alone may be supposed capable of housing. All at once, however, on closer inspection, little green patches like potato-fields are seen scattered here and there among the rocks, and a stranger is tempted to go nearer and examine them. Let him look where he is going, however, or he may make a false step; the earth may give way under his feet, and he may fall into — what? into an abyss, a cavern, a bog? No, into a hut, — into a human dwelling-place, whose existence he had overlooked, because the roof on one side was level with the ground, and nearly of the same consistency. If the traveller draw back his foot in time, and look around, he will find the place filled with a multitude of similar huts, all swarming with life."

In a parish of more than ten thousand inhabitants, there were found but four hundred beds, so that, allowing three persons on an average to each of them, about nine thousand persons must have lain on straw at the best. In a village of this parish containing forty-five families, there were but thirty-nine blankets; and in another parish of 1,648 families, 1,011 families had but one blanket each, and 299

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had none at all. "The straw we lie on," said one of the Mayo cottiers, "was given us by some neighbours in charity; we do not change it, we do not part with it at all; but as it wastes away, the neighbours give us a wisp to add to it." In respect to dress, the poorest peasants often remain for years without buying an article. In one parish there were more than three thousand persons who had bought little or nothing of this sort for five years. The men strive desperately to obtain "a breeches," and by the help of rags do contrive to screen, not to cover, their nakedness; their wives are forced to wrap an old sheet or blanket round them, and the children are often naked. Small farmers are sometimes so destitute, that they cannot go to market without borrowing a coat from one person, a waistcoat from another, and a pair of trousers from a third. As wages usually do not exceed twelve cents a day, even for the small portion of the year in which they can obtain work, it is obvious that the laborers cannot afford to spend much upon clothes.

The dwellers in the towns are no better off than their brethren in the country. Wages may be a trifle higher, but there is always a multitude of applicants, and little work to be distributed among them. There is small encouragement for the lower branches of manufacture and the mechanic arts, the bulk of the people being too poor to create any demand for the articles made; hence the excess of the agricultural over the civic population goes on constantly increasing. Bantry, says Mr. Thackeray, "is a town of cabins; the wretchedness of some of them is quite curious. An ordinary pig-sty in England is really more comfortable. Most of them were not six feet long or five feet high, built of stones huddled together, a hole being left for the people to creep in at, — a ruined thatch to keep out some little portion of the rain. A Hottentot kraal has more comforts in it." In Limerick, families of eight or nine persons inhabit single rooms, not more than four yards square, into which the rain pours through the roof, and the wind rushes through the broken windows. In Cork, says Mr. Thackeray, "there are quarters swarming with life, but of such a frightful kind as no pen need care to describe; alleys where the odors, and rags, and darkness are so hideous, that one runs frightened away from them. In some of them, they say, not the policeman, only the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

priest, can penetrate." One striking fact, ascertained at the last census, shows how universal is the poverty of the people; above a million of families, or over two thirds of the whole nation, live either in mud huts or single rooms of larger houses.

The foregoing account, which is a mere abridgment of Mr. Thornton's, is founded chiefly on the reports of the Irish Railway and Irish Poor-Law Commissioners. We have now before us, in five immense folios, the evidence taken in every part of the island, with great care and labor, by the Commission of 1844 on the Occupation of Land in Ireland. It is enough to say of it, that it confirms in every particular the preceding statements, and adds even higher coloring to this awful picture of national wretchedness. We can give but one extract; it is from the testimony given before the Commission by Daniel Griffin, a physician and surgeon of the city of Limerick, who had made it his business for years to inquire into the condition of the lower classes. During a few days preceding his examination, he collected his evidence by making minute inquiries of a few families, "taken quite indiscriminately." The following, with some abridgment, is his account of the result: —

"The families were 44 in number, consisting of 245 persons. In these there were 62 persons capable of work, with 183 persons depending on them; of these last, 45 were sick or infirm. I could ascertain with certainty the earnings of only 35 of these families, and in these there were 56 persons capable of working, each of whom on an average earned £5 or £6 within the past year, being from £7 to £8 for each family, which would be equivalent to about seven months' employment to each working person, at 7½*d.* [15 cents] a day. With regard to their food, I found that 11 of these families seemed to live rather comfortably in comparison with the rest, having milk usually with their potatoes, and meat occasionally; the remaining 33 families lived upon the lowest description of food, such as white potatoes and salt or herrings, and sometimes, but rarely, a little sour milk. Of this last number, 18 families were frequently unable to procure any food, sometimes fasting for a long period, and living for a length of time on one meal a day. One person, James Boyle, with a wife and two children, states that they lived on potatoes and salt; the family usually go without breakfast. The next, Michael M'Namara, wife and four children, says their food

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consists of potatoes and salt, sometimes a herring, frequently nothing; the family often go without a meal. Another, Daniel M'Mahon, wife and two children, — potatoes and salt, dip (a kind of grease), or a herring, rarely milk; the wife, though very sickly, did not drink a hap'worth of milk these six weeks. Then there are several others with much the same answers as these. Thomas Malony, with a wife and four children, states that his food is potatoes when he can get them, generally with salt or a herring, and sometimes a little milk; what his family eat for a whole day would scarcely make one meal; and once, lately, the whole of them, six in number, were for thirty-six hours without any food but one threepenny loaf. Others, the family of a widow, describe the same sort of food, — dry potatoes, seldom more than once a day; this last fortnight their family have had but one meal a day. Garret Lee states, 'many a day these three months he worked on a meal a day, and was glad to have it; that dry potatoes are their food, and they very seldom have enough.' John Donovan says, 'he and his family are starving; they did not eat two full meals this week; has eaten nothing himself this day, 5 P. M., but a few apples; ate nothing yesterday but their supper last night, which was obtained by pledging some of their things.' A widow states, she had no supper for her family the night her husband died; they all went to bed supperless. John Cherry says, 'the people are so poor they are ready to eat one another'; John Fitzgerald, that 'there are beggars coming to their door who are better off than they are.'

"With regard to their clothing, 10 of these families were well clad, 14 indifferently, and 20 very badly off for covering. With regard to lodging, 27 occupied a house each, and 17 a room each; the average number of rooms in each house was three, and the average rent of each house £3 8*s.* 9*d.*, that of each tenanted room £1 1*s.* 9*d.*, a year. These rooms and houses were occupied at the same time by 45 other families, besides the 44 which came under my examination, 99 families being located in 42 houses, consisting of 131 rooms. I made it my business at different times to visit the residences of these people, and found them in the most wretched condition, the staircases ruinous, the rooms ruinous, the people sleeping on straw without bedding and without bedsteads. Garret Lee says, 'his family did not go to bed these three nights, their last blanket being taken by the person from whom they rented the cellar for non-payment of rent.' Of the 44 families, 6 had nothing in the pawn-office, one had nothing to put there, having lost every thing, while the remaining 37 had every article they could spare pledged to pur-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chase food; or, as they said forcibly, 'every thing they could spare and that they could n't,' having themselves in many instances nothing but straw to lie on, and without any covering for their children at night." — Part II. pp. 744, 745.

We gladly turn to the sister kingdom of Scotland, as the distress there, though quite as great, is certainly not so universal. It exists chiefly in the large cities, the populous manufacturing districts, the northern Highlands, and the Islands. Alison, the historian, estimates that there are at least 250,000 persons in Scotland, nearly a tenth part of the population, who are in a state of almost total destitution, and are permanently retained in that state. Many of the great Highland proprietors, for reasons which we shall consider hereafter, have driven the tenantry off their estates, which they have converted into immense sheep-walks, preferring to raise brutes instead of men. The unhappy cottiers thus dispossessed have found refuge on some barren moors, but chiefly on the sea-coast, where they lived comfortably for a time by the manufacture of kelp; but the demand for this article having greatly fallen off more than twenty years ago, they were reduced to their present state of misery, often having only shell-fish and weeds to eat, with a little water-gruel at night. The peasantry still remaining in the Highlands are mostly *crofters*, or tenants of small pieces of ground, the tillage of which forms their sole support. The soil is so poor and rents are so exorbitant, that they live very miserably, and those who have but an acre or two of land are in constant danger of starvation. Once famous for their stalwart frames, their agility, and powers of endurance, they have now become meagre and stunted in appearance, and the faces of their famished children are as thin and pale as if they had been bred in the foul wynds and closes of Glasgow and Edinburgh. On the Hebrides islands, owing to the poverty of the soil, and the multiplication of the inhabitants, wretchedness is extreme, and the remoteness of their position places them almost beyond the reach of charity. The policy of consolidating farms and driving off the small tenantry has been pursued there to a great extent. A population of 500 souls was compelled to migrate from the isle of Rum, which is now occupied to advantage by a single tenant, whose family and servants do not number over 50. The multitude thus

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dispossessed of their ancient homes crowd into the great cities in search of employment and sustenance, swelling the mass of poverty there, and reducing wages and the standard of living for the lower classes to their own level. The influx of Irish laborers, also, particularly into the western counties, has had a great effect in lowering the condition of the Scottish peasantry.

It is a law of our nature, that moral degradation must go hand in hand with physical suffering. Nowhere is this more strikingly exemplified than in those quarters of Glasgow which form the sole refuge of the miserably poor, and where alone the Highlander expelled from his croft, and the distressed islanders, can find shelter. "I have four times visited these districts," says Mr. Symonds, in the Handloom Commissioners' Report, "once in the morning and three times at night; I have seen human degradation in some of its worst phases, both in England and abroad, but I can advisedly say that I did not believe, until I visited the wynds of Glasgow, that so large an amount of filth, crime, misery, and disease existed on one spot in any civilized country." Here is collected a motley population engaged in all the lower branches of industry, and an immense number who find their only means of subsistence in plunder and prostitution. Here, "in the lower lodging-houses, ten, twelve, and sometimes twenty persons, of both sexes and all ages, sleep promiscuously on the floor in different degrees of nakedness." Captain Miller, the Glasgow superintendent of police, in speaking of this district, says: —

"There is concentrated every thing that is wretched, dissolute, loathsome, and pestilential. These places are filled by a population of many thousands of miserable creatures. The houses in which they live are unfit even for sties, and every apartment is filled with a promiscuous crowd of men, women, and children, all in the most revolting state of filth and squalor. In many houses there is scarcely any ventilation; dunghills lie in the vicinity of the dwellings; and, from the extremely defective sewerage, filth of every kind constantly accumulates. In these horrid dens the most abandoned characters of the city are collected, and from thence they nightly issue to disseminate disease, and to pour upon the town every species of crime and abomination."

The population of this quarter is estimated by Mr. Sy-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

monds to be 30,000, though Alison makes it only two thirds as great. The latter writer says that Edinburgh contains about 15,000 in a state of equal wretchedness, and that the other cities of Scotland have their full proportion of the same, according to their population. The progress of crime, it is also shown, has been "more rapid in that part of the British dominions, during the last thirty years, than in any other state in Europe." Serious crimes, in particular, during the thirty years prior to 1840, increased in Scotland more than thirty-fold. In Glasgow alone, during the sixteen years before 1840, while the population advanced 70 *per cent.*, the progress of felonies and other serious crimes was 500 *per cent.* The sanitary condition of the place also leads to the same conclusions respecting the destitution and misery of a large portion of its inhabitants. The average rate of mortality in Great Britain is about 1 in 48, and in London 1 in 40; while in Glasgow, from 1835 to 1840, it was about 1 in 32, and in one year (1837) it was as high as 1 in 24½. Ireland retains its mournful preëminence in this respect also; for among the poor in Limerick, according to Dr. Griffin, whose evidence we cited on a preceding page, the rate of mortality rises to 5 *per cent.*, or 1 in 20. A general review of the condition of the poor in Scotland will surely lead one to the conclusion adopted by Mr. Laing, that "Scotch destitution has gone a step beyond English, and arrived, like that of Ireland, at a point at which all other evils are swallowed up in the urgent and ever-present danger of literal death from starvation."

If the condition of the laboring classes in England is not so frightful as that of their brethren in Scotland and Ireland, it is certainly bad enough to command the serious attention of the statesman and the philanthropist, and to justify the most gloomy forebodings. So much statistical and general evidence has recently been published on this subject, that we may safely decline entering into particulars, and mention a few general facts only for the purpose of comparison. According to the census of 1841, the population of England, including Wales, was nearly sixteen millions; the whole number of paupers who were relieved in the year ending in March, 1844, was about 1,250,000, being more than one thirteenth of the entire nation. And this vast amount

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of pauperism exists in spite of the stringent provisions of the Poor-Law Amendment, the avowed purpose of which was by great severity to deter the indigent from applying for relief. Almshouses have been converted into prisons, married couples are separated from each other, and a rigid course of hard labor and low diet has been adopted, in the hope that the poor might find their situation even more intolerable when they were supported by the public than when they relied only on themselves, — that they might prefer starvation outside of the workhouse to the severities practised within it. This rigorous system has lately been introduced, in the well-grounded fear lest the community should come to be burdened with the support of most of the laboring population who are engaged in agriculture, and who number with their families at least three and a half millions. The wages of an able-bodied adult of this class never exceed 13*s.* a week, and in many counties are as low as 7*s.* ; the average throughout the kingdom cannot exceed 9*s.* The peasants are almost always day-laborers, hired by the week or job, possessing no property, and living in rented cottages. How they live and support a family on these wages is matter of astonishment even to their employers. Their food consists chiefly of bread and potatoes, most of them tasting meat not more than half a dozen times in the course of their lives. They pay from £2 10*s.* to £4 a year for the rent of a miserable cottage, often having but two rooms, with mud walls and a floor of stone or earth. All witnesses agree that early marriages are very common among them, and in most cottages children are more numerous than the adult inmates.

"In the workhouse," says Mr. Tuffnell, an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, "where strict economy is studied, and where we are constantly told that we give the inmates too little to eat, it is well known that a man, his wife, and five children cannot usually be kept under £1 per week, and this is reckoning nothing for house-rent, and all the articles required, being purchased in large contracts, are obtained 20 *per cent.* under the shop prices. Taking into account these two latter considerations, it appears that such a family could not be maintained in a state of independence out of the workhouse, with the same *comforts* they have in it, at a less cost than 25*s.* a week, which is more than double the general agricultural wages in England."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No wonder, then, that a great number of families every year are fairly starved out of the country into some large town, and go to swell the floating population who tenant there the cellars and lodging-houses, like those described in Glasgow, and live by the worst-paid sort of manufactures, or by thieving, prostitution, and casual employment. How far this absorption of the poor into the cities and manufacturing districts has gone appears from the fact, that in twenty-one counties, where the poor are chiefly engaged in agriculture, the rate of increase of the population, from 1831 to 1841, was only 8 *per cent.*; while in the remaining counties, which contain most of the manufacturing, mining, and trading population, the rate of increase for the same period was 17 *per cent.* Dividing Scotland in the same way, the corresponding ratio was 4 against 15 *per cent.*, showing that the increase in the agricultural counties was little more than one fourth as great as in the others. Considering that the average duration of life among agriculturists is much higher, and the mortality among infants much less, and that in large cities, such as Liverpool and Bristol, and in large districts in the heart of London, such as Whitechapel, St. Martin's in the Fields, and East and West London, the number of deaths even exceeds the births, so that they would be depopulated, if it were not for their rural recruits, who come in so fast that the population actually increases with frightful rapidity, it is evident that the agricultural poor cannot find sustenance at home and are driven by stern necessity into the cities.

How they are situated when they arrive there appears from the description already given of the wynds of Glasgow, a description which will apply with little abatement to the most populous quarters of all the large cities in England. In Liverpool alone there are 8,000 inhabited cellars, one third of them either wet or damp, which contain a population of more than 35,000 souls. In Manchester, in 1838, there were 267 lodging-houses, of which Dr. Howard says, "the crowded state of the beds, filled promiscuously with men, women, and children, the floor covered over with the filthy and ragged clothing they have just put off, and with their various bundles and packages, mark the depraved and blunted state of their feelings, and the moral and social disorder that exists." In Birmingham, there were 374 such

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lodging-houses. Two asylums were opened in London in order to afford a night's lodging to houseless wanderers, and 9,840 persons were admitted into them in the first three months of 1843. Near the docks at the east end, "hundreds of poor men may be seen before daybreak in the winter, waiting for the opening of the gates in the hope of obtaining a day's work; and when the youngest and strongest, and those best known, have been taken, hundreds still may be seen returning, sick at heart, to their destitute families."

Of the manufacturing operatives, the handloom weavers are the worst paid, the wages of a whole family among them often not exceeding 5*s.* a week, and even in prosperous times do not amount to 8*s.* After what has been said respecting the necessary expenses of a family existing in the humblest manner, it is difficult to see how they subsist at all; their state is certainly one of extreme destitution; yet there are 800,000 persons entirely dependent on this employment. The bulk of the manufacturing population, it is true, are not so deeply sunk in misery as these; but their situation is still a very precarious one, and when, as is frequently the case, the fluctuations of trade cause great numbers of them to be thrown out of work, they are in imminent peril of starvation. Thus, while the manufacturing interest was in a very depressed state in 1842, formidable riots took place in the midland counties, which showed that the people had become desperate. In Manchester, there were 9,000 families earning on an average only one shilling a week; in Bolton, out of 50 mills, usually employing 8,124 workmen, 30 mills with 5,061 operatives were standing idle, or working only short time; and in Leeds, 4,025 families, being one fifth of the whole population, were dependent on the poor-rates. But the calamity reached its height in Stockport, where no less than 10,000 persons were thrown out of employment. Many of these returned to their native parishes, where alone they could claim relief as paupers, and others wandered far over Lancashire and Yorkshire in search of work. "Those who remained behind struggled gallantly before they applied for parochial relief; they first exhausted the little hoard accumulated in better days, and sold or pawned their furniture, eking out the money thus obtained with the earnings of occasional jobs."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Nothwithstanding this independence of spirit, and notwithstanding that a large portion of the population of Stockport consisted of strangers not entitled to parochial relief, the number of persons of every description who were able to claim and were compelled to accept that relief had increased, in December, 1841, to nearly seven thousand, one twelfth at least of the whole population of the Union. To so large a multitude, only scanty relief could be afforded; not more than one shilling per head weekly. The poor rates, of course, were increased in proportion; but the poverty of the rate-payers created so large a number of defaulters, that the amount collected invariably fell far short, not exceeding two thirds at most, of the sum estimated. In fact, out of 7464 rated houses existing in the township of Stockport at the date of the Report, 1632 were empty, and for nearly 3000 more default had occurred.

"The commissioners personally visited the dwellings of several poor persons. Many of them are expressly stated to have parted with clothing and bedding for food, before applying to the parish. One man had pawned his wife's wedding-ring for eighteen-pence, and his Bible for a shilling. Some were still living by the sale of their effects, and had not yet applied for relief. John Daniels (his name deserves to be recorded), a silk-weaver, with a wife and five children, having been long without work, was obliged to apply to the parish, and obtained an order for a month for four shillings a week in provisions. The whole of his incomings were then about eight shillings a week. Being asked in what manner he disposed of this pittance, he said, 'We make our breakfast for seven of us of a teacupful of oatmeal made into thin porridge, together with some bread; at dinner we have about six pounds of potatoes, with salt and bread; the tea, or supper, as you may call it, the same as at breakfast; in the whole about four pounds of bread daily, say eight-pence, two-pennyworth of potatoes, and two-pennyworth of oatmeal, amounting to a shilling a day for seven of us. This, and 10*d.* a week we have to pay for coals, make up the 8*s.* nearly.' This man, on obtaining work, gave up of his own accord part of the allowance ordered for him by the guardians. He had received 4*s.* a week for three weeks, and when the fourth payment became due, he went to the relieving officer, and said, 'I will have no more relief. I have got one warp for myself, and the prospect of another for my wife.'

"The cases personally inspected by the commissioners, being chiefly those in which relief was received from the parish, did not present the extreme of wretchedness. There were other families, in which, according to the chairman of the Board of Guar-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dians, it had been ascertained that many women had 'no clothes but a chemise, or wretched outer garment; no flannel petticoat, or any thing fit to keep out the pinching cold of winter.' The want of bedding was still more general. 'A few flocks, or a little straw, spread in the corner of the room or cellar,' were all that some poor creatures possessed, with 'no covering but a single sheet or rug. Many had to lie together, to the number of six, seven, eight, and more, of both sexes, indiscriminately huddled together in their clothes, covered by an old sack or rug.' As for the food of these miserable beings, it commonly consisted of a little oatmeal, or a few potatoes, or perhaps a little bread. 'Families,' said a provision-dealer, 'that used to buy flour, now purchase only oatmeal; they come for one or two pounds of oatmeal a day, and live upon it.' A furniture-broker, who was also examined by the commissioners, said, 'People now bring articles of such a mean description, as they would never have thought of bringing for sale before. They offer me knives and forks, bits of old iron, any thing which they have about them, and they tell me they want to raise money to buy a few potatoes with, just to carry them on another week.' . . . . .

"'Of 15,823 individuals inhabiting 2965 houses, lately visited under the direction of a committee appointed for the purpose, 1204 only are found to be fully employed, 2866 partially employed, and 4148 able to work *were wholly without employment.* The remaining 7605 persons were unable to work. The average weekly income of the above 15,823 persons was 1*s.* 4$\frac{3}{4}$*d.* each. The average weekly wages of those fully employed were 7*s.* 6$\frac{1}{4}$*d.* each. The average weekly wages of those partially employed, 4*s.* 7$\frac{1}{4}$*d.* each.'"—Thornton *on Over-Population*, pp. 33–37.

The particulars which we have given respecting the condition of the laboring classes in England are few and meagre; but they are enough to confirm the following remark by Mr. Thornton:—"Little more than one generation has been required to make Ireland what she is; and as short a period might probably, in similar circumstances, suffice to convert England into an Ireland of human misery and degradation."

Very grave questions are suggested by the picture of the social condition of Great Britain and Ireland which we have here endeavoured to exhibit. We are tempted to ask, if these are the reputed blessings of the institution of property, that vast and complex machine, so carefully constructed and guarded, the boast of free and civilized man, to which he is accustomed to attribute much of the superiority that he en-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

joys over the savage and the slave. Does the institution *necessarily* tend to produce this fearful inequality in the condition of the several classes in society, so that millions of human beings, without any fault of their own, must suffer the accumulated ills of ignorance, extreme destitution, and almost inevitable immorality, while a few thousands of their brethren, distinguished from them only by the accident of birth, monopolize all the comforts and luxuries which learning and wealth can command? Is man able to avoid the responsibility for this fearful state of things by casting the burden of it upon Providence, and saying that these evils are necessary adjuncts of the social state, and must be endured like the "plagues and earthquakes," which "break not Heaven's design," and to which the Christian submits with uncomplaining trust? Or are they rather the consequence of vicious institutions and mistaken legislation, for which man is alone accountable, and which may be remedied without pulling down the whole fabric of society and undoing all the work of modern civilization?

We may hopefully answer this last question in the affirmative, if it can be shown that in the order of Providence there is a natural check or limitation to the excessive accumulation of property in the hands of a few, and to the consequen debasement and misery of the multitude; and that this natural corrective, when not interfered with or rendered powerless by unwise laws or a bad government, does tend so rapidly and effectually towards an equalization of wealth in the community, that no considerable number of persons can possibly be brought to extreme destitution, — certainly, cannot be exposed to the danger of perishing by hunger, except by their own obvious fault. Such a check, we maintain, does exist in the very circumstance or cause to which the English school of political economists are fond of attributing the whole evil, the whole distress of the laboring classes; we refer to *the natural multiplication of the human species.* Property in the hands of an individual unquestionably tends to accumulate; one who has both money and industry can make greater gains, other things being equal, than his competitor who is obliged to depend on his industry alone. But, from the shortness of human life, an individual can hold this property only for a brief period of years; when he dies, it descends to his offspring, and by the law of nature, as they are all equally

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

near to him, it is equally divided among them. When this law is not abrogated by human legislation, it causes so frequent a distribution of estates as effectually to overcome the tendency of capital to accumulate, or to continue in a single line of heirs. No sooner is wealth heaped up than it is parcelled out again, and a constant movement or circulation is thus maintained, which sends the life-blood of capital into every part of the body politic. This distribution tends as powerfully to political as to social equality, as the former, indeed, depends upon and is regulated by the latter; hence it is the safeguard of republics, and the bane of aristocratic governments. The faster the population increases, the more rapidly does this great corrective of the accumulation of property operate; the greater the number of heirs, the more minute is the division of the parent's wealth.

But this distribution of estates is hostile to the whole spirit of the institutions of Great Britain, which is essentially aristocratic; and English law therefore seeks to obviate it by two remarkable and unnatural provisions, — the right of primogeniture and the law of entail. By the former, at the death of the parent intestate the real property descends wholly to the eldest son, to the exclusion of the daughters and younger sons; by the latter, a landholder may "tie up" his estate, as the phrase goes, for successive generations, so that a future possessor of it cannot alienate it, but must transmit it unimpaired to the person standing next to him in the line of heirs. Strictly speaking, indeed, as Alison remarks, "the English law does not recognize entails; yet they are practically established by the tendency of public feeling, and the succession of family settlements, by which great estates are effectually secured from alienation." The spirit of these two remarkable provisions is further manifested in a multitude of lesser enactments, all tending to the same end, the keeping up of great estates, and the removal, as far as possible, of all chances of alienation; to specify them all would require an analysis of the whole common law respecting real property. They are all relics of the feudal system, and the establishment of most of them in England may be traced back to the time of the Norman conquest. A modern contrivance for the same purpose is the imposition of excessive taxes on the transfer of landed estates, the stamp duty on the conveyance of small parcels of land being great out of all proportion to the value of the property conveyed.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Although these regulations directly affect real property alone, it must not be supposed that they are without influence in checking the distribution of personal effects. The aristocratic spirit is perpetuated by them, and diffused throughout the community. To keep up the family by holding the property together, or in a mass, has come to be considered almost as a matter of duty, no less than an object of ambition. The right of the eldest son to the whole real estate creates or sanctions an artificial and unreasonable distinction between him and his brothers and sisters; and when there is no such estate to be distributed, it gives him a seeming claim for a larger share, if not the whole, of the personal property; the law which expressly enjoins an inequality in the one case permits and virtually encourages it in the other. Of course, frequent partitions are made on more equitable principles; our only point is, that they are much less frequent in England than in other countries, where the law favors in every case the equal division of an estate among the children.

Such a country is France, where the law regulating the descent of property is even more democratic than in the United States. It prevents a man from disposing of his wealth as he sees fit, even by will; the right of each child to a certain portion is protected by law, only a small fraction of the original estate being left to the free disposal of its first owner. And the consequence is, though this law of succession has not yet been in force for half a century, that the class of landed proprietors in France is more numerous than that which subsists altogether on wages, while in England it is but one sixtieth part of their number. In the former country, the number of separate properties taxed for the *impôt foncier*, in 1838, had risen to 10,896,000. The average size of each property was only about fourteen acres; the number of land-owners, including their wives and children, is estimated at two thirds of the total population of the country. The peasants are proprietors of the ground they cultivate; and though the land owned by an individual often does not exceed a kitchen garden in size, and is tilled entirely by the spade, its gross product, under his patient and economical husbandry, much exceeds that of a corresponding extent of surface in one of the model monster farms of England. Three and a half millions of peasants cultivate English ground not a foot of which belongs to them, and depend entirely on wages

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which, in the best years, hardly supply them with the necessaries of life, and which leave them, if the crop fails, or the price of provisions rises, in imminent peril of starvation. The total annual value of the lands which they till on these hard terms is known to exceed forty millions sterling; and this immense income is monopolized by a few hundreds of the nobility and country gentry, — monopolized by means of legislation which opposes the order of Providence, and perverts the natural course of domestic affection, by rendering division or alienation of it almost impossible.

The princely domains of the Dukes of Sutherland and Buccleuch comprise whole counties respectively in the north and south of Scotland; and the latter had the power and the audacity, a few years ago, to say to thousands of families belonging to the Free or Seceding Scottish Kirk, the most numerous denomination in the land, that they should not have a church in which to worship God according to their consciences, though they were able to build and pay for it; the whole country, for leagues around, was his, and he would not give, lease, or sell a foot of it at any price, if it was to be used for the erection of a house of worship. The people submitted, — for *had he not a right to do as he pleased with his own?* — and the congregations assembled, Sabbath after Sabbath, in the open air, in the public highway, — which, happily, is not owned altogether by the Duke of Buccleuch. A nation submits to social oppression, to the tyranny of wealth, much more quietly than to political oppression; if Parliament had prohibited an equally large portion of the people from building a single house of worship for their God, the act would have excited a civil war.

The gigantic estates of many of the English nobility, such as the Dukes of Northumberland and Devonshire, the Marquess of Westminster, the Earls of Harrowby, Leicester, and Fitzwilliam, though they may not cover several counties, afford incomes which exceed those of many crowned heads in Europe; these nobles *own* more rich land in the heart of England than some independent princes *govern* in Germany. And their vast possessions, as a general rule, go on augmenting every generation, either from the union of estates by marriage, or from the annexation by purchase of smaller properties in their vicinity; their growth is easy; their partition or alienation is rendered by law almost impracticable. Ireland

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itself, wretched, starving Ireland, is owned, as it were, in counties, by the English and Irish nobility and gentry ; it is carved out into monster estates, which are leased piecemeal to middlemen and great farmers, who again subdivide and underlet the land which they hire, till the division is brought down to the little *conacre* patches of the miserable peasants. Many a princely income is made up from an immense aggregation of rents not exceeding 5*l.* or 10*l.* each, and is thus wrung by driblets from the unhappy tenants, who live on "lumper" potatoes and "pressagh," that they may be able to pay it. Throughout Great Britain and Ireland, the word *farmer* denotes one who hires the ground which he cultivates, while in the United States it signifies almost without exception the proprietor of the soil. In France and Switzerland, also, he who tills the land is the owner of it, and, small though his property be, its product is sufficient for his wants. Contrasting the general well-being of the farming population in these three countries with the misery of the English and Irish peasantry, and remembering also that Great Britain is vastly more opulent than either of the others, we cannot avoid attributing the whole evil to that great inequality in the distribution of her wealth, and that monopoly of her soil by a few families, which have been designedly created and fostered by the aristocratic spirit of her institutions and laws.

The English school of political economy, the school of the Edinburgh Review, of Malthus and Ricardo, of McCulloch and Dr. Chalmers, will not admit that this aggregation of land and all other property in the hands of a few is any evil at all. Looking only to the *production* of wealth, and affecting to consider its *distribution* as wholly unimportant, — a matter which will regulate itself, — they stoutly maintain that the division of land and capital is an evil ; that neither of these agents can produce its utmost beneficial effects unless accumulated in large masses ; that great improvements in agriculture cannot be made except on immense farms by the aid of opulent landholders ; that the benefit which the community receives from the operations of husbandry consists only in the *net* product, and not in the *gross* amount of food added to the national stock ; that the individual producer, the farmer or land-owner, is the best judge of his own interest, and what conduces most to his profits is sure to be most advantageous to the nation. Now, human labor is an item, and a very im-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

portant one, in the cost of raising a crop ; — economize labor, then ; substitute machines for human beings ; lower the rate of wages ; make every article as cheap as possible ; don't impede the operations of your great capitalists and land-owners, and "leave things to take care of themselves." *Laissez faire.* True, a smaller amount of food will be produced, a less number of appetites will be satisfied, and a greater crowd of laborers thrown out of employment. But the expense of the year's operations is diminished in an equal, or even larger, *proportion* ; the farmer's *net* gain is greater, and he is able to pay a higher rent to his princely landlord, who is in great need of an addition to his annual income, which may not *yet* equal a hundred thousand pounds sterling, though two or three of the English nobility count twice that sum.

And this is the theory which English economists have been advocating for half a century, and which all the great capitalists, land-owners, and farmers have been vigorously reducing to practice ! Labor has been economized with a vengeance, and we have seen the results in the picture already presented of the social condition of Great Britain. Wages have been reduced to the lowest point at which the laborers can buy bread and potatoes enough for a scanty subsistence, the surplus rural population has been drained off into the great cities or the workhouses, and twelve hundred thousand paupers have been thrown upon the public, without counting at least an equal number who are dependent in great part on private charity. Only 760,000 families in England are now employed on the tillage of her 25,632,000 acres of cultivated ground, which is an average of one family to 34 acres ; that is, a square mile gives employment to about 19 families. In portions of Tuscany, says M. Sismondi, from 300 to 700 individuals cultivate a square mile, and earn from it a comfortable subsistence ; they are proverbially the happiest peasantry in Europe, excepting perhaps the Swiss, who have a still denser population, at least an equal proportion of them engaged in agriculture, and a far more minute division of land. 'Very unthrifty husbandry this,' McCulloch and Chalmers would probably exclaim ; 'the net income of a great proprietor in Tuscany must be quite small ; with the aid of agricultural machines and the improved modes of English husbandry, three fourths of this laboring population would be dispensed with ; and the net gain — the addition to the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

national capital — would be much greater.' Very true ; but the laborers thus *dispensed with* would starve, and though the national capital might be increased, what would be the effect on the national *happiness ?*

Those who have not studied the subject will be astonished to find to what extent this policy of favoring the increase of great landed estates, of consolidating farms, and driving off the laborers and small tenants, has been carried in every part of Great Britain and Ireland. For political reasons, of late, great proprietors have become very shy of letting their lands on long leases, or, indeed, on any leases at all ; small farmers, who were sure of their little holdings for a number of years to come, were sometimes found to disregard the wishes of their landlords at an election ; tenants at will were usually more compliant. The Irish people being factious and obstinate in the matter of politics, their landlords have very generally adopted this mode of "breaking them in," and perhaps the greater portion of their farm lands are now rented without leases. Of course, this policy was ruinous for both parties, the tenants not daring to make any improvements on the ground, being in constant danger of ejection, and exposed to fresh extortion every year in the way of rent. Accordingly, when the economists had made this great discovery of the gain to be derived from the union of farms and the banishment of the tenantry, the Irish landlords had the power all in their own hands for reducing the theory immediately to practice. How they exercised it can be fully known only by an intrepid examination of the five great folios, to which we have already alluded, containing the Report of the Commissioners on the Occupation of Land in Ireland. We can give but one specimen. Lord Kenmare is the landlord, the barony of Bantry is the scene, and the Rev. Christopher Freeman, the Roman Catholic curate of the parish, is the witness ; his testimony, we should observe, is fully confirmed by eight other deponents, several of whom were banished tenants themselves, and is substantially corroborated by his Lordship's own agent, who was put upon the stand for the express purpose of confuting or explaining away their statements. Mr. Freeman says : —

"Up to the year 1840, the consolidation of farms, and the consequent wholesale eviction of tenants, was almost unknown in this barony. Lord Kenmare commenced in the year 1840 by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ejecting from the lands of Ahills 22 families, comprising 135 individuals. He ejected, in the years 1842 and 1843, 16 families, comprising 97 individuals. Total evicted from the Kenmare property 38 families, comprising 232 individuals. I am vastly under the mark; I might say a good deal more. The persons evicted paid their rent regularly; the rents amounted from 5*l.* 10*s.* to 20*l.* each, and some of them more. They were, with very few exceptions, extremely honest, well-disposed, and industrious persons; and the object to be obtained by the consolidation of these farms, and depriving these unfortunate people of their only means of subsistence, I cannot tell."

"What in general has become of them?"—"The children of some of them have been begging; some of them have died in the most dreadful distress; some of them I know to be comfortable; and some of them have had typhus fever. I attended one family of eleven immediately after being ejected. They were ill with fever, and the father was obliged to get out of bed to attend to them, and he was in the fever himself; and I was obliged to remove one out of bed in order to hear the confession of another,—and I believe that to be solely caused by Lord Kenmare's dispossessing the people.

"Was any thing done by Lord Kenmare or his agent to assist these people?"—"Nothing whatever. I went myself to Lord Kenmare, and wrote to him the following letter:—

"'My Lord,—When the cause of the distressed or afflicted is to be advocated, I feel that it would be superfluous to make an apology for trespassing on your Lordship's time. You are, I suppose, my Lord, aware, that many honest, industrious persons have been ejected from your estate in the parish of Bantry. It is to plead the cause of these unfortunate but honest people, and to enlist, if possible, your Lordship's sympathy in their behalf, that I have come to Killarney. May I request, my Lord, the favor of an interview at your Lordship's earliest convenience?

"'I have the honor to be, &c.'

"And this is the answer I got from his Lordship, which shows he was conversant of it:—

"'Sir,—In reply to your communication, I beg to say, that giving you credit for good intentions, I must yet decline granting you the interview you desire, as I cannot allow any person to interfere with me in the management of my property. I am, Sir, &c. Kenmare.'

"The means by which the consolidation was, and is about to be, accomplished, I am well acquainted with. In the great majority of cases, no law process was required. The population to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be evicted were told, that if they gave possession peaceably, and left Lord Kenmare's property, they would get their potato gardens, and a certain portion of their other crops then growing on their farms. They were then told, that if they did not comply with these terms, law proceedings would be commenced, and they were then to expect nothing but the heaviest vengeance of Lord Kenmare and his agent. It is very well ascertained that it is equal to death to the poor people to be deprived of their lands; some of them die miserably. The consequences are indeed melancholy, both as regards the persons ejected, and many of those who took the large farms at *rack* rents. At present, there are a great number in a state of uncertainty, and they must give up ultimately. They do not manure the land, because, they say, if they improved it, it would be doing so for other persons."

The whole estate of the Earl of Kenmare in this barony consists of 23,000 acres, on which is a population of 3,400 persons; and the process of ejection and consolidation seems to be still going on. His Lordship has succeeded in his main purpose in making these *improvements*, as the testimony shows, that, in one case, lands which had been let under him by a middleman for 86*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.* are now let by the Earl himself for 410*l.* Similar changes have been effected, or are even now taking place, all over Ireland; we could fill a large volume with a record of cases quite like the one here described.

Let us now turn to Scotland, and look more particularly at the forced depopulation, to which we have already alluded, of the Highland districts and the Islands. For an account of the most remarkable case we are indebted to the *Études sur l'Économie Politique* of M. Sismondi, — English political economists and other writers, for obvious reasons, being very chary of allusions to the subject; even Alison and Thornton, who deplore the issue of the experiment, as having occasioned a frightful increase of suffering and pauperism, do not enter into any particulars, and make no comment on the proceedings and motives of the chief agents in the business. But one who is not a British subject may be allowed to speak freely of the conduct even of the great Duchess of Sutherland, and her noble and wealthy fellow-proprietors and imitators. We have never met with the Account of the Improvements made on the Estates of the Marquess of Stafford, by James Loch, Esq., the agent of the Duchess in this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

business, who wrote and published his book as a justification of her proceedings ; but Sismondi's account of it appears to be temperate and trustworthy. The statement which follows is a mere translation and abridgment of this French writer's clear and eloquent review of the whole matter.

Since the beginning of the present century, the nation of the Highlanders or Gauls, the descendants of the ancient Celts, now reduced to 340,000 souls, has been almost entirely expelled from its home by the very persons whom it regarded as its chieftains, and to whom it had shown for so many centuries an enthusiastic devotion. The territory which they had cultivated from generation to generation, under a fixed rent, has been taken from them and devoted to the pasturage of flocks guarded by herdsmen who were strangers ; their houses and villages have been razed to the ground or destroyed by fire, while the unhappy people have been forced either to build cabins on the sea-shore, and endeavour to maintain their miserable existence by fishing, or to cross the ocean to seek their fortune in the back settlements of America. As this revolution took place in a distant and almost barbarous region, of which the very language was unknown in other parts of the empire, it attracted at first but little attention. But when it became known in England that some of these people had waited till a military force arrived to expel them from their villages, and sometimes had driven away the soldiers by a shower of stones ; that they had been heard to intreat that they might be massacred with their wives and children on the graves of their fathers, rather than be sent away, to perish, in misery and abandonment, to a world which wished not to receive them, and where no place was reserved for them, universal sympathy was excited. It was reported that the agent had been compelled to set fire to their houses, and even that an old man, or, according to other accounts, an old woman, refusing to leave her cabin to encounter misery and exile, her presence did not stop the incendiary, and the victim had perished in the flames. Then the public indignation showed itself, in a manner which could be neither mistaken nor braved. The Duchess of Sutherland thought she did not merit the severe judgment which was passed upon her conduct, and it was to justify her at the bar of public opinion that the book of her agent was published. He has tried to prove, and he has done it successfully, that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Duchess has exercised only her acknowledged legal rights, and in so doing has had regard to the preservation of the existence of her vassals, for which she felt that she was responsible.

The ancestors of this lady were proprietors of about three fourths of the county of Sutherland, in the most northern part of Scotland. Their possessions measured about one million of English acres. When the Countess of Sutherland inherited these domains, which she brought as a dowry to the Marquess of Stafford, since created Duke of Sutherland, their population did not exceed 15,000. The revenue obtained by the proprietor from her vassals was so small, that it might be considered rather as an acknowledgment of sovereignty, than as a rent. It appears, that as late as 1811, each family was bound to an annual payment only of a few shillings in money, of some articles of game, and of a few days' labor. On the other hand, every man born upon these domains was required to spare neither his blood nor his life in defending the sovereignty and honor of the family of which he considered himself as a member. *Mhoir-Fhear Chattaibh*, as he was called in Gaelic, or *The Great Man of Sutherland*, had always found his companions in arms ready to defend him, at the peril of their lives, against every enemy, whether foreign or domestic.

The population was pretty equally distributed over the whole district. Every valley had its hamlet; the arable land was devoted to the cultivation of barley and oats, and the hills were given to the pasturage of cattle. The people were poor, as labor and pasturage were their chief resources; the climate was severe, the winters long, and they had neither manufactures, commerce, nor money. But they had generally enough to supply their wants; and even when the wrath of Heaven sometimes destroyed their harvests, and decimated them and their herds by famine, they knew how to submit with resignation, because the hand of man had had no part in their sufferings.

Between the years 1811 and 1820, these 15,000 inhabitants, forming about 3,000 families, were driven away, or, to use Mr. Loch's softened expression, *removed*, from the whole interior of the county. All their villages were demolished or burnt, and all their fields converted into pasture. A similar clearing was made, almost simultaneously, by the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

owners of the rest of the county, and their example was soon followed by the great proprietors in Ross and Cromarty counties, and generally throughout the north of Scotland. Mr. Loch assures us that the Duchess of Sutherland has shown far more humanity than any of her neighbours; she has interested herself in the fate of the exiles, has offered them a retreat on her own territory, and, on taking away from them 794,000 acres, of which they had been in possession from time immemorial, she has generously left them about 6,000, or two acres to a family. The land thus granted to them, however, had never been cultivated, and had yielded no income to the proprietor. Still, it was not conceded to them gratuitously; they are subject to a moderate rent of two and a half shillings an acre, and no leases are granted to them for more than seven years; but they are assured that the leases shall be renewed for another term of seven years, if the land should be well cultivated. Mr. Loch informs us that the fate of these exiles has not been so deplorable as they foreboded. Some, it is true, were unwilling to receive any thing from her who had driven them from their homes. The clan Gunn, or the MacHamish, after leaving the mountains of Kildonan, and the valleys of Naver and Helmsdale, quitted the country entirely, and we are not told what has become of them. But with the exception of this tribe, and of 32 families from Strathbrora, who left for America in 1818 and 1819, the clansmen, we are told, have *almost* all accepted the lots offered them by the Duchess. They have been aided by her in building their new habitations, and in attempting to cultivate the ground which had hitherto remained a waste.

The territory of which the Duchess has thus reclaimed possession has been divided by her agent, Mr. Loch, into 29 great farms, very unequal in extent, some of them being larger than the department of the Seine in France. These farms, intended solely for the pasturage of sheep, are each inhabited by a single family, and as the kind of labor required upon them is a new thing in Scotland, only English farm-servants are employed. As early as 1820, the place of the brave men who formerly shed their blood in defence of Mhoir-Fhear Chattaibh was filled by 131,000 sheep, and their number is now doubtless much increased. No human voice is now heard within the narrow passes of those hills once

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

made illustrious by the combats of an ancient race ; no one any longer calls to mind their glorious recollections ; the valleys have no more any hamlets, no accent of joy or grief any longer troubles those vast solitudes ; but the heir of the Earl of Sutherland, who is established for the future in England, many hundreds of miles distant from the country of his maternal ancestors, can repose and enjoy himself for his ancient vassals ; in his magnificent abode at Trentham he can display a royal pomp, and encourage by his luxury the manufactures of England.

There is no doubt that the experiment has been successful ; this revolution in the property, the habits, the affections, the whole existence, of a little nation has prodigiously augmented the already colossal fortune of the Duke of Sutherland. This expulsion of the Gaelic people from their ancient firesides is considered as legal ; but will men dare to say that it is just ? Other great proprietors in the county have not been so humane even as the Duchess. " The clan of the Gruids on Lochshin," says Mr. Loch, " was numerous ; it does not appear that any lot of land was assigned to this people, or that they have received any recompense since the time of their expulsion, which took place in the winter of 1818." This ancient nation of the Celts or Gauls, which formerly possessed not only the British isles, but France, and a part of Italy and Spain, shall it be driven, in the name of the laws, from those very rocks where it was never conquered, from those rocks where it maintained its independence, that was lost everywhere else ? Ought these last representatives of the most ancient masters of Europe to be exiled ?

It is by a cruel abuse of legal forms, by a flagrant usurpation, that the Highlanders either of Sutherland county or of other parts of Scotland have been considered as having no right to the soil which they have occupied for centuries, and of which, in fact, they were co-proprietors with their chieftains. Even their name, *Klaan*, in Gaelic signifies *children*. All their usages, all their reciprocal relations, all their affections, were founded on the tradition that they were the offspring of one family ; all their rights were those of the children of a common parent to the common patrimony. The chieftain exercised, perhaps he usurped, the right of dividing the land among them, and even of frequently altering this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

distribution. It was a matter of public policy with the Celts, as well as with the Germans, that families should frequently, even annually, change their position in the district which belonged to them, lest they should become too much attached to the fields which they cultivated, and thus be unfitted for war, and averse to undertaking military expeditions. But though their locations were altered, the vacated places were occupied by other members of the same clan, and the chieftain could not alienate any portion of the common property. The tenure of the lands remained the same ; the assessment for the public defence, the annual contribution for the chieftain who ruled them and led them to battle, were never augmented.

The vast extent of seigneurial domains is not a condition peculiar to England. In the ninth and tenth centuries, Maine, Anjou, and Poitou were, for the counts of these provinces, three great farms rather than three principalities. Switzerland, which in so many respects resembles Scotland, was at the same epoch divided among a small number of great lords. If the counts of Kyburg, Lentzburg, and Hapsburg had been protected by English laws, they would now be situated just as the counts of Sutherland were thirty years ago ; perhaps they might have had the same taste for improvements, and have depopulated their lands to give place to flocks and herds. But during the last eight centuries, the legislation of Continental Europe has constantly tended to guaranty and ameliorate the lot of the feudatory, the vassal, the serf, — to confirm the independence of the peasant, to cover him with the buckler of prescription, to shield him from the exactions of his lord, and to elevate his allotment to the rank of property. But English law has always favored the great lords ; English jurists have constantly assimilated political rights to property, and have defended them under this title. The Gaelic tenant was never conquered ; he did not obtain his land from the liberality of his lord, but was originally a fellow-proprietor with him, or rather with his clan. The chief whom he followed to battle regarded him at first as his friend and relation, then as his soldier, afterwards as his vassal, still later as his farmer, and finally as his hired laborer, whom he might employ for a time, but might banish from the estate when he had no further need of his services.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The first step in the usurpation was to grant the *tacks*, or portions of land, to the vassals for a fixed period of time. This appeared to be a concession, as formerly the occupants could be changed at will ; but in truth it was a usurpation, for now, instead of filling the vacated places with other clansmen on precisely the same conditions, the lands came to be considered as farms, and at each renewal of the lease new terms might be imposed, and a higher rent demanded. Thus the Highland lords, who were rightfully entitled only to an invariable rent levied on the property of the clan, obtained at last an absolute ownership of the domain which paid this rent. Still, they were far from believing that the time would come when they would take advantage of the renewal of the leases, not merely to raise the rent, but to expel their vassals from the estate. Before coming to a determination so barbarous, the chieftain must have ceased to share the opinions, the sentiments, the point of honor of his countrymen ; he must have ceased to regard himself as their father or their brother, or even to remember that he was himself a Scotchman ; a base cupidity must have stifled in him that sympathy of kindred blood on which their common ancestors relied when they confided to him the fate of his people.

A count has no more right to banish from their homes the inhabitants of his county, than a king has to expel from the land the inhabitants of his kingdom. Let the most despotic monarch make the trial, and he will soon learn the hazard of thus overleaping the bounds of his authority. Let the great English lords beware ! The less numerous they are, the more dangerous will it be for them to put themselves in opposition to the nation. Let them not say, when their own interests are at stake, as the agent of the Duchess of Sutherland has said : — " Why should a different rule be adopted in this case from that which has been followed in every other ? Why should the absolute right of owners to their property be abandoned or sacrificed for the public advantage, and for motives which concern the public alone ? " If they should come one day to believe that they have no need of the people, the people will begin to believe in its turn that it has no need of them. If they think that 340,000 brave mountaineers of the Gaelic race can be profitably driven off to make room for four million sheep, these mountaineers can still more easily find useful substitutes for thirty or forty,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perhaps for three hundred, great lords who have ceased to be their countrymen.

We have chosen to give this whole account of the depopulation of the Highlands in M. Sismondi's own eloquent words, though necessarily with much abridgment and transposition, because we have not the book at hand from which he obtained the particulars, and because we would not be suspected of exaggeration or national prejudice in exposing the barbarity and flagrant injustice of the proceeding. The whole history shows in a striking light the tendency of English law to favor the growth and permanency of great landed estates, and the natural result of those measures which have been so strenuously advocated by the English economists, — the *Chrematistic* or Capitalist school, as Sismondi calls them, — who defend the aggregation of land and capital into a few hands, and leave the interests of the laboring classes of the population to take care of themselves. The introduction of the system of monster farms, and the expulsion of the rural tenantry, have been going on more slowly and quietly in England than in the two sister kingdoms, but quite as extensively, and attended with perfectly similar results. The consequence is an enormous increase of pauperism, a reduction of wages almost to the point of starvaton, an overflow of the whole empire with laborers out of employment, a famine during the present year, when there was no absolute lack of food, and, in short, all the terrible signs and proofs of national decay and distress. The whole evil may be described in the few words in which the philosophical Roman pointed out the cause of the ruin of Italy; *latifundia perdidêre — Britanniam.*

Finding that the support of the laboring classes was a burden not to be avoided, — that if employment and wages were not given to them, they must be maintained as paupers, — that if they were driven from the country, they would take refuge in the cities and manufacturing districts, where the very air would be polluted by their misery and their crimes, the capitalists and land-owners, guided by the political economists, have at last discovered that the evil consists solely in a redundancy of population, and that the only remedies are emigration and the discouragement of marriages. The doctrine of Malthus is the last refuge of the *Chrematistic* school; the New Poor Law, the conversion of almshouses into places of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

punishment, the separation of the sexes in them, and the change of public charity into a system of graduated starvation, are the results of an attempt to reduce this doctrine to practice. Population, say the Malthusians, has an inherent tendency, in all cases, to outrun the means of subsistence; it tends constantly to increase in a *geometrical progression*, doubling every twenty-five or thirty years, while the supply of food, at the best, cannot be increased faster than in an *arithmetical ratio*, equal quantities being added every twenty-five years. Put these two principles together, and it follows by mathematical demonstration that the whole world must soon be brought to the verge of actual starvation. Why the human race has so long remained far on this side of the awful precipice, why we have not, on their theory, been starved out long ago, or have not been reduced, like a wrecked crew on a raft in the midst of the ocean, to fight with each other for the last loaf, is a mystery which they do not condescend to explain. As the powers of a geometrical so far exceed those of an arithmetical ratio, the world ought to have been over-peopled some thousands of years ago. But it is not; Providence has not yet sent any human beings into the world when there was no place at the table for them.

Even in the extreme case of Ireland, we have shown that the extent and fruitfulness of the soil would suffice for a population thrice as large as the present one; and the misery of the people there was nearly as excessive half a century ago as it is now, though the population then was but half as large. There is no surplus of population, but there is a frightful surplus of labor which can find no employment, and consequently cannot be exchanged for the food which exists all around in abundance. A child can see that the famine of the present year was not caused by the lack either of food or of wealth; if the national stock of both could be equally distributed, not one of Queen Victoria's subjects would suffer a single pang from hunger. It is palpable that the evil does not consist in over-population, but in unequal distribution. But you say, that it is difficult to bring about a more equal division without infringing the rights of property. Granted, for the sake of argument; but do not confound *this* difficulty with another of quite an opposite character,—the difficulty of feeding a great multitude out of five small loaves and two fishes. There are now loaves and fishes enough for all; but

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they are all in the hands of very few persons, who claim them as their own, and the problem is, how to get them out of these few hands, and to give them to the starving people. Before you declare this problem to be insoluble, abolish your laws of primogeniture and entail, adopt the French law of succession, break up your monster farms into cottage allotments, substitute spade husbandry for agricultural machines, and *educate the people.* If you leave them in the condition of brutes, depend upon it that they will multiply like brutes.

Of all the doctrines of the English political economists, that of Malthus is at once the most absurd and the most pericious. It is a futile attempt to throw off the burden of responsibility for that state of things which is plainly attributable to nothing but human selfishness and improvidence, — to consider as irremediable, and inherent in the very constitution of man, those evils which flow directly from a vicious form of social and political organization, and from unjust and unnatural laws. Its only monition is, *to let things alone ;* to allow privation, wretchedness, and crime to produce their appropriate results ; to abstain from aggravating the evil by any interposition of public or private charity between the stern decrees of an overruling necessity and its destined victims. It seeks to deprive the poor of the only solace which remains to them, — the indulgence, within the limits of morality and law, of the natural appetites and affections ; it holds up "abstinence from marriage for prudential motives" as the only panacea for their wretchedness, though it acknowledges that this implies a degree of forethought and self-restraint which is not to be expected from them in their miserable and degraded condition. But all other expedients for alleviating their sufferings it pronounces to be futile and self-destructive. Luckily, it is unsound in theory, and is abundantly confuted by facts.

Malthus begins with the assumption, that there is no check to the multiplication of the species except from the want of food. According to his doctrine, those classes of the population ought to increase most rapidly which are most abundantly supplied with the means of subsistence ; while the growth of the destitute classes should be perpetually checked by their poverty. Now the very reverse happens to be the case, and this because the rate of increase actually depends, not on the supply of food, but on sundry moral considera-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions which he leaves entirely out of view. If every man got married as soon as he was urged by natural inclination, and as soon as he saw there was no fear lest his wife and himself should perish of actual starvation, the world would be peopled very rapidly. But no one propounds to himself the question in this shape; the candidate for matrimony asks further, if he is likely to improve his condition in life by the measure, or if he is sure at any rate not to lose position and caste by it, not to descend in the social scale, or to forfeit those advantages and enjoyments which habit has caused him to consider as necessaries of life. If there is any risk of this sort, you may be sure that prudence or ambition will get the victory over love. Raise the standard of living, increase the number of artificial wants, multiply the chances of advancement in life, and people will become still more cautious about bringing upon themselves the impediment of a family. The middling classes of society increase in number very slowly, the upper classes do not increase at all. Marriages among them are governed entirely by prudential considerations. Who ever heard of kings marrying for love? Among the English nobility and gentry, families frequently die out, estates are united, and titles become extinct. If the House of Lords were not replenished by continual promotions to the peerage, it would soon become a very meagre assemblage. Younger sons prefer a life of licentious celibacy to the restraints of a family, and to the almost certain loss of caste by getting a wife without an estate. The undowried charms of the daughters are not likely to be besieged by a multitude of suitors. Thus the sole chance of continuing the family often depends on the marriage of the eldest son and heir, and this is quite likely to be deferred till he has passed the period of youthful extravagance, and purchased the discretion which comes only with maturity of years.

On the other hand, the poorer classes, who have no hope of bettering their condition, and cannot fall far because they are already near the bottom, marry with little consideration or foresight. And even this little fails among those who are already steeped in poverty to the lips, who are too ignorant and degraded ever to look beyond the wants and impulses of the present moment, and too wretched to fear any increase of their misery. Mr. Laing states this point strongly.

"Evidence abounds of the tendency to improvident marriages

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

among the distressed population of the manufacturing districts generally, and also among such portions of the agricultural population as are most wretched and degraded. In fact, an accelerated rate of increase in the population is a necessary result of poverty down to the point where literal starvation arrests its progress; and how low this point lies, the instance of Ireland sufficiently attests. While lumper-potatoes can be had for food, and a corner of a cellar with a bundle of mouldy straw for lodging, it is a *demonstrated fact* that population will continue to increase at a rate *five times more rapid* than in countries where every peasant lives under his own roof and cultivates his own estate. The reasons are obvious; directly [*sic*] the laborer is placed in a situation where he has nothing to look forward to, — no hope of being able to better his condition by restraint, — no definite period of establishment in life as a master-workman, or independent proprietor, to mark the prudent and customary era of marriage, — all the natural checks on the instinctive appetite are withdrawn, and he marries, as a matter of course, as soon as he feels the inclination. The great check on premature marriage in every class is the 'public opinion' of that class, which requires a certain income and establishment in life before marrying, under penalty of losing caste and being looked upon as silly and imprudent. When the standard prescribed by the 'public opinion' of the class has sunk so low that, as Mr. Fletcher says of the weaving population of Nuneaton, men commonly marry 'without a home to go to,' or 'with a bed consisting of chaff, held together by bricks, and covered with a wrapper,' for sole stock of furniture, it is evident that all moral check on population is at an end, and that the evil must of necessity go on propagating itself, until either typhus fever and famine make a clearance, or the moral and physical condition of the people is raised by exertions from without. . . . . .

"It is *not true*, that if we relieve distress and diminish vice and misery, population rushes in like a spring-tide to efface the puny lines which we have traced in the sand. On the contrary, it is distinctly true, that duty and expediency, the means of raising the condition of the laboring classes, and the means of rightly proportioning their numbers to the supply of food, go hand in hand; and that in applying ourselves zealously to the task imposed upon us by religion and humanity, of relieving immediate distress, and promoting the welfare and improvement of the poorer classes, we are at the same time adopting the only effectual means of limiting the morbid and unhealthy increase of a destitute population." — Laing *on National Distress*, pp. 68–70.

The Malthusians have simply inverted the order of cause

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and effect. They say, that increase of population causes misery ; while the truth is, that misery causes the increase of population. Of course, we must reverse the Malthusian precepts for the management of the poor ; instead of preaching abstinence and moral restraint to them, and endeavouring to starve them into it, — instead of separating the sexes in workhouses, prohibiting out-door relief, discountenancing public and private charity, and declaring that the condition of the destitute classes is hopeless, and that interference with them will only increase their misery, — we must strive to succour and elevate them, to give them a stake in life, to surround them not only with necessaries, but with some comforts and luxuries, the fear of losing which will inculcate prudence more strongly, will do more to deter them from forming imprudent marriages, than all the lectures of Dr. Chalmers, or all the stories and illustrations of Miss Martineau. The difficulty of accomplishing all this is unquestionably great, but any thing is better than the despondency of McCulloch, who speaks gloomily of "the irremediable helotism of the great majority" of the laboring classes, but, in conformity with the principles of the *Chrematistic* school, of which he is the great expounder and advocate, has no advice to offer except to take away all the remaining restrictions on trade, and then "to fold our arms, and leave the *dénouement* to time and Providence." *

That the view here taken of the law of population is the only correct one is shown not only by theoretical considerations, but by the incontrovertible evidence of facts. In France, where the land is minutely divided, and the peasantry are vastly better off than in England, the rate of increase of the population, for ten years, is only 5 *per cent.*, while in the latter country it is 15, and in Connaught, the sink of Irish misery and degradation, from 1821 to 1831, it was as high as 22 *per cent.* In the province of Ulster the rate is 14, while in the county of Donegal it rises to 20 *per cent.*

"And this is precisely the county which official reports represent as forming an exception to the general condition of Presbyterian Ulster, and affording an instance of poverty little less extreme than that of Connaught. In the latter province, we find

* McCulloch *on Taxation.* London, 1845, pp. 110, 111.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Galway and Mayo, notoriously the two most destitute counties, exhibiting, the one an increase of 27, and the other of 25 *per cent.* In Munster, we find Clare, Kerry, and Tipperary at the head of the list." — Laing *on National Distress*, p. 67.

But enough; the subject leads on to endless disquisition and illustrations, and we have already much exceeded our limits. We have pointed out the evils in the social condition of England, and some of the causes of them, certainly with no feeling of bitterness, and in no vainglorious spirit, because the condition of our own population is so much happier, and because our political institutions exhibit tendencies the very opposite of those which have imposed this intolerable burden of poverty and wretchedness upon the necks of British subjects. The spectacle is too awful, the prospect is too appalling, to excite any other emotions than those of the deepest sympathy and commiseration. The causes of the evil are deeply seated; they are inwoven with the very texture of British institutions, and cannot be removed without destroying the whole fabric. The feudalism of wealth, the serfdom of the laboring classes, are so firmly anchored in the empire, that they can be shaken only by the hurricane strength of a revolution like that which prostrated the throne and the nobility of France in 1789. The immediate cause of the wildest excesses of that epoch was a cry of the populace for bread; and one of the great permanent effects of that memorable convulsion was the adoption of a democratic law regulating the descent of property. England is already heaving with the first throes of a similar outbreak. The frequent suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act in Ireland, and the disarming of its people, the Chartist disturbances in 1838, and the riots in the midland counties in 1842, are signs the purport of which cannot be mistaken. Even now, peace is maintained only at the point of the bayonet, by the presence of large bodies of troops, and of an armed and disciplined police. These facts are full of warning to the stoutest declaimer for the preservation of noble families, and for the extension of great landed estates. Let the blessings of an hereditary aristocracy be what they may, admit all that is claimed for it by such advocates as Alison and Dr. Chalmers, it is still possible that they may be purchased at too high a price.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Art. IX. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *The Roman Traitor: a True Tale of the Republic. A Historical Romance.* By Henry William Herbert, Author of "Marmaduke Wyvil," "Cromwell," "The Brothers," &c. New York: William Taylor. 1847. 2 vols. 12mo.

We are not so fortunate as to have read any of the writings of Mr. Herbert, save the work whose title stands at the head of this brief notice. We say fortunate; for, if his other writings, in respect to ability, at least, are of the same high order as this, we may consider it a misfortune not to have fallen in with them. But that a certain book, or the book of a certain author, should not have been met with in these latitudes, argues nothing, we would remark, to the disadvantage either of author or book. It simply goes to show, among other facts, that great numbers of undoubtedly good and learned works are yearly printed and published in New York and Philadelphia, not one of which ever visits the shelves of a bookseller of our modern Athens; and, on the other hand, that an equal number of our Boston books are not so common as we, who sometimes make books, wish they were in the shops of the chief men of the craft in our Southern capitals. Our literature, we are sorry to say it, is local, exclusive, bounded, not by Mason and Dixon's line, indeed — who reads a Southern book? — but by the Hudson and the Delaware.

This is one sufficient reason why The Roman Traitor has never been allowed to commit his treasons in these Northern parts. And not only has this remarkable work not been read here, but, what is stranger still, it has not, as far as we know, been reviewed; though that it has not been read is no conclusive evidence, as the world goes, that it may not have been reviewed. We notice it now, not because, within our present limits, and at the close of our number, we can in any sense do it proper justice, but because, as it was not till the very last moment laid upon our table, — owing to the causes above hinted at, — we cannot let another three months pass by without just commending it to the public as a work of learning, taste, and power. It gives throughout abundant tokens of genius and fine scholarship; and no one can read it and not receive yet deeper impressions of the gigantic vices and crimes, and sometimes the almost equally gigantic, but for the most part the pigmy, virtues of the great republic. The theme of the romance is Catiline, — Catiline the conspirator, the traitor, the assassin, the vulgar murderer, the violator, the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

savage, fiend, and brute, and all in one, therefore, the genuine Roman. We do not see that the author exaggerates any of the darker shades of the Roman character in general, or of the character of Catiline in particular. Indeed, it were impossible, with the most adventurous imagination, to overdraw a portrait of the cruelty, licentiousness, and crime of that people; — that is, if a tithe of what their own poets and historians have transmitted is true. But while Mr. Herbert does ample justice, with a pen dipped, as it should be, in Stygian dyes, to the enormous wickedness of Rome, to the characters both of her men and her women, whose equals for moral turpitude no other empire has ever seen, he does not paint vice alone; he has a heart and a pen for depicting with quite equal vigor and truth to nature woman's loveliness and virtue, and the gentle scenes where their triumphs are found. The scene which for moral power and beauty most impressed us — and it is one unsurpassed, we are ready to say, in any of our modern fictions for every element of moral power — is that where Arvina and Julia are reconciled, after his frank confession of unfaithfulness at the supper given to a few of his friends by Catiline, where Lucia, the natural daughter of the traitor, is introduced, and, by seducing the virtue of Arvina, lays the train for the most important incidents of the narrative. All the finer and more gentle emotions and affections are here brought into play, and an interview of highest interest and deepest pathos ensues, managed throughout with great knowledge of human nature, and with the consummate skill of an accomplished artist. The supper scene which precedes it, though no more than Roman in its voluptuousness, quite reaches, we think, the limits of what is allowable, in these times, for a writer to present to his reader, or wholesome for the reader to contemplate even on the printed page. It is hardly enough to say, in defence of such pictures, that they are transcripts from human nature and real life.

Our limited space prevents us from dwelling upon particular traits and single characters introduced upon the scene. But we must refer in one word to the admirable delineation of the great Consul and Orator, in whose period of office the Catiline conspiracy was crushed. We think Mr. Herbert has shown in this a profound insight, acquired by investigating the authenticated facts of Cicero's life, and carefully studying his works. The translation of the first Catiline oration, which the course of the story requires to be given entire, is executed with great fidelity and vigor; and the whole scene which passed in the Senate on that occasion is drawn with masterly effect. He has also interwoven spirited translations of the speeches of Cæsar, Cato, and Catiline, as presented by Sallust. In the first volume, also, Mr.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Herbert has introduced two songs in the antique measures. The first is an Alcaic ode, as constructed by Horace. It is sung in a blacksmith's stithy, by the sturdy workmen, as they ply their sledges. So far as the thing can be done in the English language, Mr. Herbert has represented the *quantitative* rhythm of the Latin, and produced a singularly fine specimen of the modern antique. The same general remark may be applied to the Sapphic and Adonian stanzas, sung by Ægle at the house of Fulvia. We should be glad to quote them both, if we had room.

---

2. — *A Discourse on the Life and Character of the late John A. G. Davis, Professor of Law in the University of Virginia;* delivered before the Society of Alumni, June 29th, 1847. By Lucian Minor, Esq. Richmond. 1847. 8vo. pp. 32.

Our readers will remember the thrill of horror which went through the country in 1840, when the news circulated that a valuable and distinguished citizen had fallen a victim to the unbridled passions of a profligate young man; that the life of Mr. Davis, the able Professor of Law in the University of Virginia, had been taken by a student whose turbulence he was endeavouring in the course of his official duty to repress. The murderer fled; but the active efforts of the community were speedily successful in accomplishing his arrest, and justice seemed in a fair way of receiving its due. Unhappily, the ignorance, weakness, or corruption of a magistrate set the blood-stained culprit at large on bail. The sum, to be sure, was a heavy one, but the great wealth of the family enabled them readily to meet the penalty; and the ancient and proud Commonwealth of Virginia stood in the unenviable attitude of the barbarian who takes in atonement for the blood of a kinsman a compensation in money. But though the laws of man were thus evaded by "wealth which is stained by filth of hands," the judgment of God followed the murderer over the face of the earth. The terrors of a guilty conscience, personified by the ancient poets as the avenging Erinnys, hunted the wretched victim of profligacy and crime, until he was driven to complete by suicide the tragedy which he had commenced with murder. What guilt, and what retribution, transcending all human punishment!

The Discourse, whose title is placed at the head of this notice, was delivered before the Society of the Alumni of the University.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Minor, its author, is a well-known lawyer and philanthropist of Virginia, distinguished not only in his profession, but as an eloquent and efficient advocate of the Temperance reform in that State. Some of our readers may remember a series of letters written by him ten or twelve years ago, during a tour he was making through the New England States. They were published at first in a newspaper, and afterwards, we believe, collected into a pamphlet. Nothing better has been written on the New England life, manners, and character; the letters were highly entertaining, as well as intelligent, candid, and just; and they exhibited no ordinary powers of English style.

We recognize the same qualities in this Discourse. Mr. Minor has drawn in vivid colors the character of his lamented friend and associate. He describes his early adherence to high and honorable principle; his successes achieved by noble means; the growing confidence which the country felt in his character and ability; and the result of that confidence in the appointment of Mr. Davis to the arduous and distinguished position of Professor of Law in the University of Virginia. In connection with this branch of his subject, Mr. Minor makes some remarks, worthy of all consideration by the appointing bodies in our universities, on the importance of taking young men for professors, instead of choosing those whose "previous reputation may attract students by its blaze"; a rule which he pronounces "one of the most fallacious and mischievous that can sway the governors of a college."

The services of Mr. Davis, his arduous and indefatigable labors in his professorship, are next very ably set forth. The picture of what he accomplished in his brief career makes us feel deeply how great was the loss the country suffered from the hand of the assassin. The Discourse closes with a delineation of "a model lawyer," founded on or suggested by the character of Professor Davis. This is very happily done, and deserves the careful attention of every young man who is deciding upon the choice of that profession.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

3.— *The Germania and Agricola of Caius Cornelius Tacitus, with Notes for Colleges.* By W. S. Tyler, Professor of the Greek and Latin Languages in Amherst College. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1847. 12mo. pp. 181.

Mr. Tyler has edited, in a handsome and convenient form, two of the most celebrated works of the great Roman historian. We welcome the book as a useful addition to the classical literature of our country. We need such American editions as this of the Greek and Roman writers. American scholars cannot establish new texts by the critical comparison of MSS.; that part of the work of classical philology must be done, for the most part, by our European brethren. But all the other means of making good editions are nearly as accessible to Americans as to Europeans, except that our public libraries are still inadequate to meet the demands of the age, and the scholar must procure books, the tools of his profession, at his own expense.

In the Preface, Mr. Tyler has explained the principles and objects which he has had in view in the preparation of this edition. The next thirteen pages are occupied by a well-written Life of Tacitus, in which not merely outward events are narrated, but the character of the historian, both as a man and as a writer, is minutely and faithfully drawn. The text is founded on that of Walther, with some modifications from the labors of Grimm, Günther, Gruber, Kiessling, and others. It is very correctly and elegantly prepared and printed. The notes to each of the two treatises are introduced by a general *critique* upon the merits and matter of the work. The body of the notes is drawn up with care, learning, and judgment. Points of style and grammatical construction, and historical references, are ably illustrated. We have been struck with the elegant precision which marks these notes; they hit the happy medium between the too much of some commentators and the too little of others. The style of Tacitus is not an easy one; the young student needs considerable aid to help him master its peculiarities. It is frequently obscure from condensation, almost rivalling that of Thucydides; sometimes from a tendency to poetical expression, which Professor Tyler has well pointed out; and sometimes from the general affectations of the age in which he lived. On all these matters, the scholar requires the assistance of one who has mastered in a comprehensive manner the characteristics of the Imperial time, and the spirit of its language and literature. Thus guided, the young scholar will be able to comprehend and enjoy the immortal monuments of one of the greatest and most magnificent minds that adorned the annals of Rome.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

4. — *A Discourse on the Uses and Importance of History, illustrated by a Comparison of the American and French Revolutions;* delivered before the Alumni of the University of Virginia, June 29th, 1847. By W. C. Rives, Esq. Richmond. 1847. 8vo. pp. 57.

Mr. Rives commands a flowing and rhythmical style; his language is rich, copious, and clear. If it is open to criticism in any respect, we should call it deficient in compression and point. Mr. Rives is one of the most accomplished and distinguished sons of Virginia. He has shown himself eloquent in debate, and able in diplomacy. He has filled some of the highest offices of our government, and held positions from which, as from a vantage-ground, he has been able to contemplate the great march of the events which will constitute the history of our age.

This circumstance makes the selection of the subject of History a fortunate one, fortunate for the speaker and for the audience he was called upon to address. He begins with an able analysis of the character and use of historical studies, and carries out and enforces the general principles by examples drawn from the American and French Revolutions. With a rapid and glowing pencil he delineates these great acts in the drama of modern history, the mighty personages who enacted their parts in them, and the contrasted results which flowed from the opposite principles on which the plots were conducted. Mr. Rives shows a wide knowledge of all that bears upon the subject, and adorns his pages with a rich, but at the same time tasteful, profusion of illustrations. Though the discourse can hardly be said to contain any new matter or original speculation, the great lessons of history are most ably deduced and impressively taught.

---

5. — *The Voyage of the Jamestown on her Errand of Mercy.* Boston. 1847. 8vo. pp. 154.

The connection of Captain R. B. Forbes with the sending of the Jamestown to Ireland, laden with provisions for a starving nation, has given his name a world-wide and enviable celebrity. The active services he rendered in this mission of charity will be a source of happy recollections to him through life, and of consolation in the hour of death. Whatever wealth the successful prosecution of commercial enterprise may enable him to leave to his children will be but dust in the balance, when com-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pared with the priceless legacy of honor and blessing which they will inherit in the memory of their father's devotion to the cause of suffering humanity.

The present volume, containing a record of all the facts and incidents belonging to this remarkable enterprise, is printed for the purpose of aiding the funds still to be bestowed in alleviating the wants of Ireland. Mr. Forbes's Introduction is frank, characteristic, and entertaining. This is followed by a "Report," containing a history of the voyage, the reception in Ireland, and the return thence. The Appendix contains the correspondence between Captain Forbes and the different parties who were connected with the business of the expedition; the accounts of the cargo; and a report of the meetings, speeches, and entertainments of every kind by which the arrival of the Jamestown was celebrated in Ireland. All these things constitute a valuable and interesting record, that will hand this voyage down to future times as the most illustrious naval expedition and victory which has ever yet been achieved in the history of the seas.

The volume concludes with the following poem, written by Mr. J. B. Felton, a graduate of Harvard University the present year. We copy it, correcting two or three misprints which injure its effect.

"From the clouds whence the lightning, death-laden, hath burst,
The soft shower is sent, and the young flower nursed,
And the earth is with beauty endued;
The wind, in whose rage the huge forest is whirled,
Bears the blessings of commerce and peace through the world; —
God's agents of woe all work good:
But thou, mighty ship, built by man to destroy, —
Thou, the first of thy race, bear'st an errand of joy.

"So of old when Elijah proclaimed the stern will,
'These years shall no rain fall, no dews shall distil,'
And famine scowled fierce on the land,
The bird of ill omen, whose fear-thrilling croak
Falls chill on the heart, as Death's angel had spoke,
Submissive obeyed God's command;
And the beak which had revelled in carnage and blood
To the desert, love-guided, bore mercy and food.

"Ship, whose proud mission is love's freight to bear,
When winds winged with blessings and heart-uttered prayer
O'er the ocean have sped thy return,
O, ne'er may the deck be polluted with strife,
Which to famine-worn millions went pregnant with life,
Ne'er thy dark sides with death's fires burn!
Black raven, God-sent to the desert with food,
O, return not again to thy carnage and blood!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists, by the Rules of Evidence administered in Courts of Justice; with an Account of the Trial of Jesus. By Simon Greenleaf, LL. D., Dane Professor of Law in Harvard University. Second Edition, revised and corrected by the Author. London: A. Maxwell & Son. 1847. 8vo. pp. 568.

The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw, the first American Consul at Canton. With a Life of the Author, by Josiah Quincy. Boston: Crosby & Nichols. 1847. 8vo. pp. 360.

An Oration delivered before the Authorities of the City of Boston, at the Celebration of the Declaration of Independence, July 5, 1847. By Thomas G. Cary. Boston: J. H. Eastburn. 1847. 8vo. pp. 38.

A Comprehensive Pronouncing and Explanatory Dictionary of the English Language; with Vocabularies of Classical, Scripture, and Modern Geographical Names. By Joseph E. Worcester. Revised and enlarged, and made substantially an Abridgment of the Author's "Universal and Critical Dictionary." Boston: Jenks, Palmer, & Co. 1847. 12mo. pp. 491.

The Panegyricus of Isocrates, from the Text of Bremi, with English Notes. By C. C. Felton, A. M., Eliot Professor of Greek Literature in the University at Cambridge. Cambridge: George Nichols, Bookseller to the University. 1847. 12mo. pp. 124.

[The beautiful typography of this volume attracts immediate notice. It is the first book printed in America from what is called the Porsonian Greek type, a font of which has been imported for the University Press at Cambridge.]

Modern Painters. By a Graduate of Oxford. First American from the third London Edition, revised by the Author. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1847. 12mo. pp. 422.

Hints to Young Architects, calculated to facilitate their Practical Operations. By George Wightwick, Architect. With Additional Notes and Hints to Persons about building in the Country. By A. J. Downing. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1847. 8vo. pp. 157.

A French Grammar, containing all the Rules of the Language upon a New and Improved Plan. By Count de Laporte, Instructer in the French Language in Harvard University. Second Edition. Boston: W. D. Ticknor & Co. 1847. 12mo. pp. 607.

Speaking Exercises, for the Illustration of the Rules and Idioms of the French Language. By Count de Laporte. Second Edition. Boston: W. D. Ticknor & Co. 1847. 12mo. pp. 152 and 93.

A Self-teaching Reader for the Study of the Pronunciation of the French Language, after a Plan entirely New. By Count de Laporte.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Second Edition, carefully revised and much improved. Boston: W. D. Ticknor & Co. 1847. 12mo. pp. 138.

Progress, a Satire. By John G. Saxe. Second Edition. New York: John Allen. 1847. 8vo. pp. 32.

A History of Rome, from the Earliest Times to the Death of Commodus, A. D. 192. By Dr. Leonhard Schmitz, F. R. S. E., Rector of the High School, Edinburgh. Andover: Allen, Morrill, & Wardwell. 1847. 12mo. pp. 456.

Sparks's American Biography. New Series, Vol. XIV. Life of John Ledyard, the American Traveller. By Jared Sparks. Boston: Little & Brown. 1847. 12mo. pp. 419.

The Genius of Scotland; or Sketches of Scottish Scenery, Literature, and Religion. By Rev. Robert Turnbull. Second Edition. New York: Robert Carter. 1847. 12mo. pp. 379.

The Alphabetical Drawing Book, and Pictorial Natural History of Quadrupeds. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1847. Small 4to. pp. 67.

The Irish Priest, or, What for Ireland? London: Longmans. 1847. 12mo. pp. 171.

History of Mexico, her Civil Wars and Colonial and Revolutionary Annals, from the Period of the Spanish Conquest to the Present Time; including an Account of the War with the United States, its Causes and Military Achievements. By Philip Young, M. D. Cincinnati: J. A. & U. P. James. 1847. 8vo. pp. 564.

Memorial of the Sprague Family: a Poem recited at a Meeting in Duxbury of the Descendants and Connections of Hon. Seth Sprague, on the Occasion of his Eighty-sixth Birth-day, July 4th, 1846; with the Family Genealogy and Biographical Sketches in Notes. By Richard Soule, Jr. Boston: James Munroe & Co. 1847. 12mo. pp. 191.

The Months. By William H. C. Hosmer. Boston: W. D. Ticknor & Co. 1847. 12mo. pp. 72.

Wiley and Putnam's Library of Choice Reading. Nos. XCVIII. and XCIX. The Autobiography of Goethe. Poetry and Truth, from My Life. Edited by Parke Godwin. Parts 3 and 4. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1847. 12mo. pp. 208 and 116.

A History of Framingham, Massachusetts, including the Plantation, from 1640 to the Present Time; with an Appendix, containing a Notice of Sudbury and its first Proprietors, and a Register of the Inhabitants of Framingham before 1800, with Genealogical Sketches. By William Barry, late Pastor of the First Church in Framingham. Boston: James Munroe & Co. 1847. 8vo. pp. 456.

The True Story of my Life, a Sketch. By Hans Christian Andersen. Translated by Mary Howitt. Boston: James Munroe & Co. 1847. 16mo. pp. 298.

A Voice from the South, comprising Letters from Georgia to Massachusetts and to the Southern States. Baltimore: Samuel E. Smith. 1847. 8vo. pp. 72.

Sons of Thunder: a Tribute to the Memory of Alexander Vinèt and Thomas Chalmers. By Robert Turnbull. Hartford: Brackett & Fuller. 1847. 8vo. pp. 22.

A Reply to General Joseph Reed's Remarks on a Late Publication in the Independent Gazetteer, with some Observations on his Address to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the People of Pennsylvania. By General John Cadwallader. Philadelphia: T. Bradford. 1783. [Reprinted, 1847.] 12mo. pp. 36.

Discovery by Charles T. Jackson, M. D., of the Applicability of Sulphuric Ether to the Prevention of Pain in Surgical Operations. By Martin Gay, M. D. Boston: David Clapp. 1847. 8vo. pp. 29 and 18.

Discovery of the Inhalation of Sulphuric Ether as a Preventive of Pain. By J. B. S. Jackson, M. D. From the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal of June 30, 1847. 8vo. pp. 8.

Some Account of the Letheon: or, Who is the Discoverer? By Edward Warren. Third Edition, revised and enlarged. Boston: Dutton & Wentworth, Printers. 1847. 8vo. pp. 88.

The Winter Evening Fireside. By W. G. Dix. Boston: W. D. Ticknor & Co. 1847. 12mo. pp. 36.

Eight Days in New Orleans, in February, 1847. By Albert J. Pickett, of Montgomery, Alabama. 8vo. pp. 40.

A Letter to the Editor of the North American Review, on Hebrew Grammar. By Moses Stuart, Professor in the Theological Seminary, Andover. Andover: William H. Wardwell. 1847. 12mo. pp. 38.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED